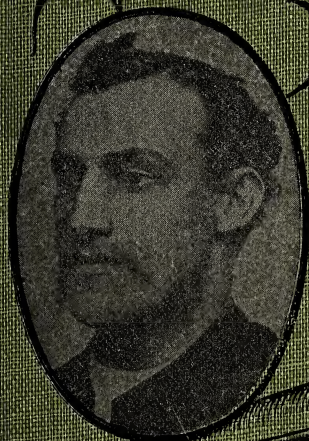


# Bryan Roe,

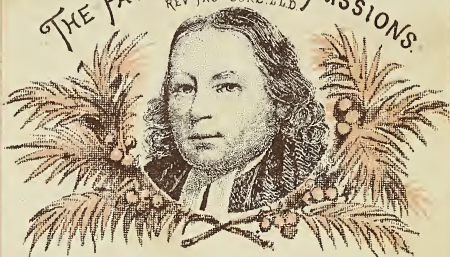
## A SOLDIER OF THE CROSS.

SKETCHES OF MISSIONARY  
LIFE AND ADVENTURE  
IN WEST CENTRAL AFRICA.



C. R. JOHNSON

THE FATHER OF OUR MISSIONS.  
REV THOS COKE, LL.D.



*St Peter's, Lady Lane*

Wesleyan Methodist

JUVENILE

Home and Foreign Missionary Society.

Presented to

*Joseph Daynes*

in recognition of his services as a  
Collector for this Society.

*E. Felce*

Secretary.

*Dec: 29<sup>th</sup> 1898*













*Bryan Roe*



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# BRYAN ROE:

A Soldier of the Cross.

MISSIONARY TRAVELS AND ADVENTURE IN  
WEST CENTRAL AFRICA.

BY  
REV. C. R. JOHNSON.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY  
REV. MARSHALL HARTLEY,  
*Secretary of the Conference.*



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## PREFACE.

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WHILST endeavouring to show something of what Bryan Roe did and suffered for Western Africa, I have attempted also to present a faithful picture of the dangers and difficulties which all missionaries in that land of death have to face. I am afraid that in the past the interest manifested in our Eastern missions has caused us to forget the fact that the scenes of some of our greatest achievements for Christ have been laid in West Africa. While Exeter Hall has resounded from year to year with the voices of men from India, China, and South Africa, it has been noticed with sorrow and pain that the platform has seldom been occupied by a missionary from the West Coast, and if this book only succeeds in drawing more sympathetic attention to the labours of those who stand in perilous places, it will not have been written in vain.

My heartiest thanks are due to the Revs. David Roe, J. T. F. Halligey, and H. J. Ellis, and to the officials at the Mission House, for the materials they collected and placed at my disposal. C. R. J.

CAM, GLOUCESTERSHIRE, *Sept.* 19th, 1896.

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## INTRODUCTION.

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BRYAN ROE was in many respects a strong man, and, as in the case of all such, the value of his life lay much more in what he *was* than in what he did. "As the man is, so is his strength," and the secret of Mr. Roe's success as a Missionary is to be found in a spirit disciplined by prayer, by study, by a close walk with God, and in an enthusiastic passion for preaching Christ. He possessed most of the qualities which go to the making of a true Missionary, and only those who knew something of his inner life—his consecration to God, his patience under misrepresentation and injustice, his indomitable perseverance, his contagious zeal, and his devoutness—can fully appreciate his value to the Church, or understand what a loss to Western Africa his call higher has involved. To increase the number of these is the purpose of this book, sent forth in the hope that it may help to kindle and keep glowing the flame of Missionary enthusiasm in many hearts.

Friendship with Missionaries is one of the great

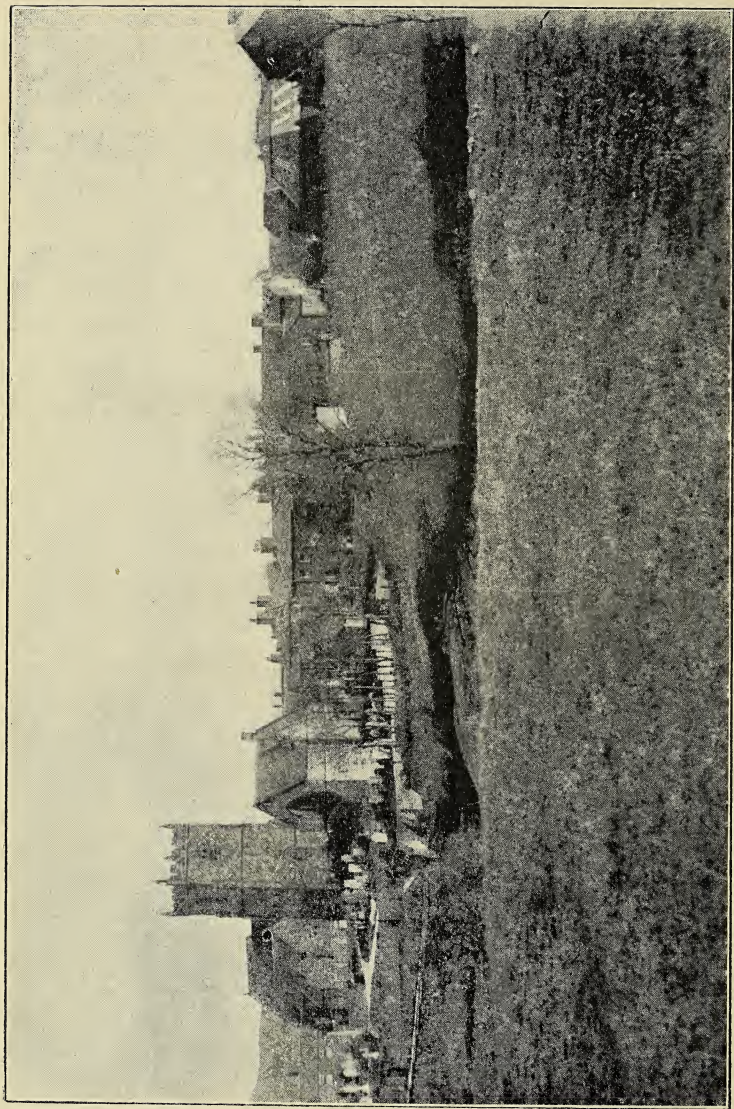


privileges of my life ; and among the many whom I have known Bryan Roe ranks very high, for his own and for his work's sake. May the Master whom he so fervently loved and so faithfully served cause this Memoir to further the great Missionary enterprise which was so dear to the heart of the servant whom He has called home to Himself.

MARSHALL HARTLEY.







CHEDDLETON CHURCH AND VILLAGE.



## BRYAN ROE: A SOLDIER OF THE CROSS

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### CHAPTER I.

#### CHEDDLETON—THE ROES—A VILLAGE REVIVAL AND ITS RESULTS.

INSIGNIFICANT and obscure have been the birth places of many famous men, and it seems passing strange to some minds that great and good men can spring from such surroundings. The Pharisees of old discounted the claims of Christ because of His supposed Galilean origin, and sneeringly asked, "Can any good come out of Nazareth?"

Few people, I imagine, outside the Pottery district, have heard of Cheddleton, a small village situate in North Staffordshire, about three miles from Leek. There are not more than 300 people in the parish, and probably its population has never exceeded that number; and yet its records reach back considerably over a thousand years. Methodist histories, known and read of all men, utterly ignore the place, and appear, indeed, to be quite unconscious of its existence, notwithstanding the fact that from this quaint



old and obscure village Methodism has reaped a rich and abundant harvest. It would seem almost beyond belief were I to recount the number of Methodist families, ministers, and influential laymen that have sprung from the Methodism of Cheddleton. The ministers are found in both the Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist Churches, some of them in the front rank, while many of the laymen occupy prominent and influential positions in the commercial world. The truth of this statement will at once be seen when it is remembered that such men as Dr. Joseph Wood, ex-President of the Primitive Methodist Conference, Mr. Thomas Willshaw, of Manchester, Mr. J. T. Warrington, of Liverpool, Messrs. A. and J. Morton, of Leek, are connected by birth or otherwise with Cheddleton. To this village, some thirty-six years ago, came Thomas Roe, bringing with him his wife and young family, David, Elizabeth, Harvey, and Eli; and here, on October 27th, 1859, Bryan was born at the Yew Tree farm. Thomas Roe was a man of no mean ability. Starting life on his own account at nine years of age as a farm lad earning one pound per annum, with board and lodgings generously thrown in, he had, by dint of hard work and patient perseverance, pushed his way up in the world until, when we come across him four years after Bryan's birth, we find him a fairly well-to-do tenant farmer, and the respected churchwarden of Gratwich church. There was nothing in this world that he disliked so much as being defeated by anything he was contending with, and the lessons he taught his four sons in the art of conquering difficulties may account in some measure for the success that has attended them in

their various spheres of work. This dislike of defeat was shown in more ways than one, and occasionally in a manner not altogether congenial to the feelings of his family. Bryan Roe has told me that sometimes he would arrive home from school bearing upon his person the marks of a sanguinary encounter with some scholastic rival. His father would regard him with a somewhat suspicious eye. "Been fighting, eh?" would be the enquiry made. "Yes, father." "And who conquered?" If the answer was, "I did, father," a short lecture on the pernicious tendencies of pugilism would follow, concluding with the admonition, "Don't do it again." But if Bryan had reluctantly to confess that he had come off only second best in the fray, his father would add insult to injury by administering another sound thrashing, finishing it off by saying, "You ought not to fight; but if you are driven to it you ought always to win."

Owing, it may be, to the probable fact that there was no Sunday school connected with the Anglican Church at Cheddleton during Thomas Roe's residence there, the children attended the Wesleyan school, and David distinctly remembers hearing Richard Weaver preach from the text, "The Master is come, and calleth for thee."

"I was converted under that sermon," he says, "but being a mere lad at the time, with no one to really instruct me, I gradually lost all the good I had received."

At Gratwich a different order of things prevailed. There was a Church school, and to it the children were regularly sent Sunday after Sunday. Mr. Roe was chosen churchwarden for several years in succession, and his son Harvey had the duty of collecting Church rates thrust upon him.

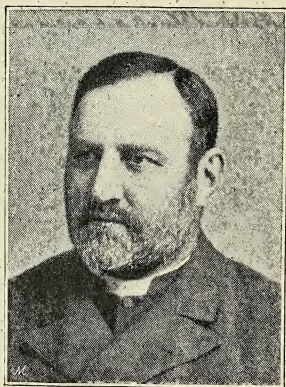
In the honourable position of churchwarden Thomas Roe might have continued until the day of his death had not an incident occurred in 1864, which, trifling as it seemed on the surface, proved in reality to be the turning point in the spiritual fortunes of the family. His eldest son, David, a lad of sixteen, left home to seek a living in America. That there was a special providence of God in the matter one cannot doubt, for up to this time David had manifested no particular desire for change, and seemed quite content with the idea of some day succeeding his father in the management of the farm. Beginning with a dream in the night, the impression grew upon the mind of the embryo farmer that he must go to America, and to America he accordingly went. He landed in New York with the proverbial half-crown in his pocket, and probably left it without much more, though he had determined, like many another youth of energy and enterprising spirit, to make his fortune. In this laudable ambition he might easily have succeeded, for, landing in the stirring times of war, he was offered 1,400 dollars to go as a substitute for a gallant soldier of the North to fight for the freedom of the slaves against the Confederate States. It was an offer not to be lightly despised, and would have been eagerly accepted by the adventurous young immigrant had he not received at the same time a letter from his mother earnestly beseeching him to take no active part in the great struggle. The 1,400 dollars went into the pockets of another man; but David Roe found something of far greater value than gold—he found religion, he found God. His new life and surroundings led him into earnest thought about spiritual things. His sense of loss on leaving parents

and friends behind, his yearning for love, his longing for the old restfulness of home-life, brought the kingdom of heaven very near to him, and opened for him the refuge of its everlasting gates and the repose of its eternal peace. David Roe became a Methodist, and, possessing gifts much above the average, he was soon called upon to exercise them. Sitting in church one Sunday morning he heard his pastor announce that "brother Roe would preach in the evening." This was the first intimation he had of what was expected of him, and all through the afternoon his mind was confused as to what he should preach. Towards evening he went for a stroll in the lonely backwoods, and while holding communion there with God seemed to hear a quiet voice within him saying, "Preach Christ! Preach Christ!" At the appointed hour he went into the pulpit with fear and trembling, and preached for twenty minutes. What he said he has now no recollection of; but at the end of the service the minister took him by the hand and said: "Brother Roe, you are evidently called of God to preach, and it is our duty to make arrangements for you to go to college at once."

The expression "at once" was evidently used advisedly, for within a week the youthful preacher found himself entered as a student of Wyoming College, Pennsylvania. How useful those 1,400 dollars would have proved at this time! for, possessing only a very slender purse, he had to work his way through college, ringing the bell for classes, lighting fires, and so on, in return for which he received board, lodging, and tuition. He comforted himself with the thought, however, that the presence in his purse of the almighty dollars might have meant the absence



from his heart of the Almighty God, seeing that he was converted during a revival which occurred at the very time he would have been away on distant battle-fields doing soldier's duty. He stayed three years at Wyoming, during which time he had charge of a small Methodist Episcopal Church which had fallen on evil times, and which had connected with it two mission places. It was hard, uphill work, but it could not have fallen into more



REV. DAVID ROE.

capable hands. The cause thrived and flourished under his zealous and painstaking care, a great revival broke out, and hundreds of people were brought to a knowledge of God. At one of the mission places a church was built, and it soon became the centre of earnest evangelistic effort, which was far-reaching in its influence, and eminently stimulating to other Churches in its effects. But

success was purchased at the cost of the missionary's health. What with the strain of his college course, his pastoral work, his preparation for the pulpit, and his church-building, David Roe's health broke down, and he was ordered by the doctors to return to England for complete rest and change.

The influence of the change that had been wrought in the life of David Roe by the mighty Spirit of God soon led to a complete revolution in the orderly household of the farmer Churchman, who was now occupying

the Lea farm, near Eccleshall, having left his daughter Elizabeth and her husband in charge of the one vacated. The *form* of godliness hitherto preserved was found to be unsatisfying and unsafe. A small Primitive Methodist chapel became as much frequented by the farmer and his family as the parish church, and one by one, father, mother, and children were converted to God, Harvey being the last to consecrate himself to the service of Christ.

The circumstances attending the conversion of three of the brothers are singular enough to demand some little attention. James Simkin, a young shoemaker of High Offley, had the misfortune to meet with an accident which rendered him incapable for a time of following his occupation. Taking advantage of his involuntary holiday, he paid a long-promised visit to an old aunt of his at Bishop's Offley, and being an earnest Primitive Methodist, he determined to do something for Christ in the village, which, he saw, was spiritually dead. Just before retiring to bed on the first evening, he said, "Aunt, shall I read a chapter out of t' good old Book, and pray wi' ye?"

"Just as yo' like, Jim," was the reply. "I'm no ranter ; but it shall never be said that Nanny Shropshire shut her ears to the reading of God's word."

The truth of her assertion that she was no "ranter" was evidenced by the fact that a prolonged search had to be made for the Bible, which was discovered at last hidden safely away on top of an old grandfather's clock, covered with dust and mildew. It was with a somewhat shamefaced air that Nanny wiped away the telltale tokens of neglect and laid the book before her nephew. She expected nothing less than a sharp lecture, and silently upbraided herself

for not having had the Bible in a more conspicuous position and a less dusty condition. But whatever James' thoughts were he gave no expression to them, and contented himself with reading a short Psalm and engaging in prayer, which so affected his aunt that next night she invited a neighbour in to hear Jim read and pray. "He do it quite natural-like ; a'most as good as any parson, and he ain't no scholard either," she said, not a little proud of her nephew's gift.

The neighbour, moved by curiosity, came, and James ventured a few comments on the portion he read. While engaged in prayer the Holy Spirit descended most powerfully, the neighbour wept aloud, and Mrs. Shropshire cried out for God to have mercy on her. Both found salvation that night. The news spread through the village like wildfire next morning that "Nanny Shropshire and her neighbour ha' gotten converted, and there's to be praiching in her cottage the neet."

The little cottage was in consequence crowded that night, and young Simkin read, prayed, and exhorted so fervently and with such manifest power that several men and women were led to Christ.

The work had now assumed a phase which Simkin felt unable to deal with alone, and he called to his assistance the services of Richard Hodson, a Primitive Methodist local preacher. Night after night for over a week the two took their stand on the village green, holding forth the word of life, and among the converts gathered in was Thomas Roe's dairymaid. The night after her conversion the two evangelists called at the Lea farm, and invited all the inmates to the service. Bryan alone was able to attend, and when he returned his face was beaming

with a new-found joy. Little did he guess when he left home of the important issues that were to attend his presence on the village green that day! Before the lengthening shadows of night had darkened the earth he had seen himself in the light of the cross; he had seen Him whom to know is life eternal. Bryan Roe, young as he was, had taken his place in the ranks of the redeemed, and his life henceforth was to be spent in the service of the Saviour.

On the Sunday following it was decided to hold a camp meeting on the green in the afternoon, and a cottage lovefeast at night, and to both these services the Primitive Methodists turned up in great numbers from the neighbouring districts. Just for the fun of the thing Harvey Roe attended the lovefeast, and to his intense surprise one of the speakers proved to be his young brother Bryan, who spoke so touchingly that the whole congregation were moved to tears. When the prayer-meeting was entered upon Harvey thought it was high time for him to leave; the proceedings had not been quite so "funny" as he had anticipated, and he was quietly making for the door when he caught sight of his brother Eli and four of the Lea farm servants kneeling among many others at the penitent form. While he was gazing at them Richard Hodson came up with the question, "Are you not going to join your brothers and become a soldier of the cross with them?"

"Not to-night," was the reply.

"Not to-night!" repeated Hodson; "why, you may be in hell before morning!"

Never before had Harvey Roe been talked to in so plain a manner, and he left the meeting indignant at what he called Hodson's impertinence. He went

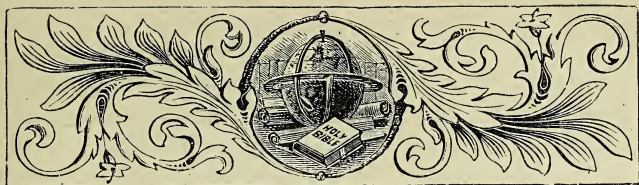


off to bed before the others arrived home, but not to sleep. Hodson's words rang in his ears, and threw him into an agony of distress, and before it was fairly light next morning he stole off to an old barn, and there, alone with God, sought and found the blessing his brothers already possessed.

One can imagine the feelings of the family as they gathered around the fireside altar that night to sing a simple hymn, to hear a portion of Scripture read, and to be committed in prayer to the fatherly care and goodness of God—how their hearts would swell with gratitude and gladness at the thought that one and all they were the redeemed of the Lord. Separations would inevitably come in the near or distant future, but they were able to rejoice in the sure and certain hope of meeting again, if not on earth, in heaven, in the great hereafter.

Nearly all the inmates of the Lea farm, servants included, joined the Church in the cottage at Bishop's Offley, and the permanent results of that village revival may be judged from the fact that three of the converts, Harvey and Bryan Roe and G. Harris, became ministers, and four others acceptable local preachers. So thriving did the young cause become that in less than two years a chapel was built, the site being given by Mr. Thomas Roe, who was now deeply attached to Primitive Methodism. Up to the day of his death, which occurred in 1879, he was a staunch and generous supporter of the Church of his later years, and had the joy of seeing his eldest son, David, actively engaged in the work of the English ministry, and two other sons preparing for a similar career. His work was taken up by his third-born son, Eli, who settled down on the Lea farm, where he continues to this day.





## CHAPTER II.

### BEGINNING TO WORK—REVIVAL SERVICES— RICHMOND.

JUST about the time of the revival at Bishop's Offley the fortunes of David Roe took another sudden turn, and the future of his life, as regards his sphere of work, was very considerably altered. His intention in coming to England had been to quietly rest until his health was fully restored, and then to return to America. His ardent nature, however, would not allow him to remain idle long, and he was soon busily employed in preaching wherever an opportunity occurred, both in Wesleyan and Primitive Methodist pulpits.

One Monday morning he received a letter from the Rev. Michael Johnson, Chairman of the Macclesfield District, whom he had never seen or heard of, asking for an interview. The letter filled him with gloomy forebodings. His knowledge of Methodism was almost exclusively American, and in the States it was required of a man to obtain a licence before venturing to preach. He repaired to Macclesfield, expecting to be taken severely to task and soundly rated for daring to preach without permission ; but,

to his intense surprise, almost the first words Mr. Johnson spoke to him were: "I want you to go to Buxton."

"Why?" asked the young preacher, in sheer amazement.

"The minister there is ill," was the reply, "and you must supply for him."

"But I am returning to America very shortly," protested Mr. Roe,

"That is all right," said the Chairman with a genial smile; "but, nevertheless, you must go to Buxton at once."

And at the end of the week he went. So faithfully did he discharge the onerous duties that fell to him that the English Conference claimed him for her own, sent him to Didsbury College, and from thence into regular circuit work, where the opinions formed of him at the commencement of his career have been fully justified. Many of his charges have been in large centres of population, and for quite a number of years he has been labouring among the poorer classes in the east of London.

All this had a most important influence upon the minds of two of his brothers, who soon began to give tokens of the talents they possessed in the way of ready speech. Bryan, from the outset, was intensely in earnest, and had the same mighty power in prayer as his mother, of whom it was commonly said in the village that if she put any man's name down on her praying list he would either have to give himself to God soon, or die. Of course, the language was very much exaggerated, but it proves what the people's ideas of Mrs. Roe's powers were, and many a sorrowing wife or mother besought her prayers on behalf of

an erring husband or a wayward lad. I have been told that dying men, in the last hours of their mortal agony, have sent not for the parish priest or minister,



MRS. ROE.

but for Mrs. Roe, feeling that she could comfort them better than those, part of whose duty it was to administer consolation to the sick and suffering.

Bryan, at this time, was being educated at the

Eccleshall Grammar School, and his cheerful disposition and Christian spirit won for him the golden opinions of masters and scholars. Mr. John Hargreaves, the head master, remembers him distinctly, and writes: "It is more than twenty years since Bryan Roe was at school here, but I can imagine I see him now entering the room, and with bright smile wishing me good morning. He was always a thoroughly conscientious and painstaking pupil, who endeared himself to his teachers by his diligence and obedience, and to his schoolfellows by his eminent good-nature. Amongst the younger boys he was an especial favourite, never imposing upon them, but ever ready to champion their cause and take their part in any trouble."

His first attempt at preaching was in a small Primitive Methodist Chapel at Breewood, in the Stafford Primitive Methodist Circuit. It was winter time, and the ground was thickly covered with snow, but, accompanied by James Simkin, he trudged cheerfully ten miles to his appointment, glad of the opportunity to do something for his Master. He was then just turned fourteen, and his text, appropriately enough was, "There is a lad here" (John vi. 9). The cause at Breewood was just about expiring at the time, but this service proved to be the beginning of better and brighter days, for a revival broke out, many prominent people in the village were converted, and the work has gone on flourishing ever since. Under Bryan's sermon several men found salvation, and his call to preach was thereby attested. "It is not the blessing of the Pope that gives men authority to preach in the name of Christ," said Dr. Guinness Rogers in his reply to Mr. Gladstone's letter on the validity of Anglican



orders, "but the fruit of their labours." This was, evidently, the view taken by the shrewd and godly Methodists of Staffordshire, for very soon after this initial effort, the letters "B. R." appeared at the bottom of the Stafford circuit plan in conjunction with "H. R.," which signified that the brothers Bryan and Harvey Roe were qualifying as Primitive Methodist local preachers.

It was simply circumstances, and not differences of opinion, that led Bryan later on to throw in his lot with Wesleyan Methodism, and up to the day of his death he entertained the highest possible regard for the Church of his boyhood, in which he and other members of his family had received so much spiritual blessing, and in which, too, one of his brothers had become a prominent minister.

At the age of fifteen he was sent out into the world to fight the battle of life on his own account, and was apprenticed to Mr. M. Deville, a draper and zealous Wesleyan in the quaint old town of Uttoxeter. It was here that he really first became acquainted with Wesleyan Methodism, and, joining the Church, he threw himself into active Christian work with characteristic energy and earnestness. Sunday Schools, Bands of Hope, Mutual Improvement Classes, and Tract Societies found in him an enthusiastic worker, while as a local preacher and sick-visitor he was held in universal esteem. He was soon in great demand as a preacher, his fame having spread abroad, and he became familiarly known as the "boy preacher." His power even in those early days was seen in the effect his words produced upon the congregations. Hardly a service passed by without some person being brought to



Christ, and strong men, hardy miners and rough railway navvies, often wept as he faithfully declared the unfailing love and boundless grace of the Great Father, God. Just a year ago I attended the Uttoxeter foreign missionary meeting as deputation, and Mr. Roe's old master, singularly enough, was chairman. When it became known in the town that I had been Mr. Roe's colleague in Africa, and had but recently returned from his sphere of work, great interest was aroused, and the old-fashioned chapel was thronged with men and women who had known him in those boyhood days, and had received good from his ministrations.

When his indentures were out, Mr. Roe removed to Northwich, and was warmly welcomed by the Church there, for his name was not unknown. Speaking of him at this time, the Rev. James Burton, Primitive Methodist minister of Torquay, says: "He came for several years in succession to preach the anniversary sermons at the Morrilow Heath P. M. chapel. These visits were always eagerly looked forward to by the congregation, and without exception proved times of great awakening and blessing. It was no uncommon occurrence for the day to close with half-a-dozen precious souls brought into the Redeemer's kingdom. I remember on one occasion he took for his text, 'And the Spirit and the Bride say come. And let him that heareth say come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will let him take the water of life freely' (Rev. xxii. 17). Methinks I see him now with a glow upon his face as he dealt with the universality of the invitation, repeating again and again the words: 'Whosoever will, whosoever will'; and as he did so the crowded con-

gregation was filled and thrilled with a gracious sense of the Master's presence. That service was crowned with the salvation of many souls, two members of my own family being among the number.

"While belonging to the Wesleyan Church," adds Mr. Burton, "he had a deep-rooted love for Primitive Methodism, and was ever ready to spend and be spent in its interests."

As the years went by, and his work was more and more owned of God, the conviction grew upon him that he was called to give himself to the ministry, and in 1881 he was unanimously recommended as a candidate by the Macclesfield District Synod. The Conference that year, however, decided to accept few candidates, and Mr. Roe's case was not considered. Nothing daunted by this he entered Harley College as a student under Dr. H. Grattan Guinness, and spent two useful years there, seeking to be more thoroughly furnished for the work which he confidently felt God had for him to do.

We find him in the summer of 1882 spending his vacation at Macclesfield in charge of the Newtown Primitive Methodist Church, his brother Harvey, who had just been appointed to it, having been ordered away on a sea voyage to recruit his broken health.

Newtown had long been regarded as a forlorn hope. The church was a magnificent building, but it had never prospered, and in 1882 its fortunes were at so low an ebb that the Primitive Conference hesitated between retiring from it and giving it another chance. Bryan Roe's brief ministry there, backed up afterwards by the energetic labours of his brother, proved to be the turning point in its career, and it soon

became one of the most flourishing causes in the Connexion.

Some notable conversions took place as the result of Bryan's earnest ministry indoors and out, for he was just as much at home on a chair in the open street as he was in the pulpit of the church. Among the most remarkable conversions that took place at this period of his work is the following, told by the man himself to the Rev. Harvey Roe. "An early Sunday morning service was being held in a low part of the town known as the Dams, and I was there with all the effects of a Saturday night's drunken debauch about me, waiting for the public to open that I might go in and have a drink. Mr. Roe began to speak from the words, 'I am not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth'; and as he described the 'power' and dwelt upon the 'everyone' I was cut to the heart. Taking my short pipe out of my mouth I put it in my pocket, and said to my mates: 'Lads, I'm off. I can stand this no longer. Yon chap has summed me up to a T. He knows everything that ever I did.' I made straight for home, saying to myself all the while: 'That gospel will do for me; yes, that will do for me. Christ is able to save everyone, even a drunkard like myself.' My wife, who was a member of the Newtown chapel, was getting ready for service when I entered the house, and I said: 'Wife, you wait until I wash and tidy myself up a bit and I'll go down with you. I have just heard that young lad who has come to your chapel preach, and I want to hear him again.' We went to the chapel, and when the preacher came into the pulpit I fixed my eyes upon him and listened for

all I was worth. He made me feel the weight of my sins more heavily than ever ; but I heard him again at night, and, thank God, I was led at that service to seek forgiveness at the foot of the cross." This man became a useful, earnest, and devoted Christian, and after paying off his "ale scores" at the various public-houses he had been in the habit of frequenting, he gave himself up to Sunday-school teaching and temperance work.

Whilst in Macclesfield Bryan one day saw a bill announcing a spiritualist meeting, and as the public were invited to ask questions he determined to be present. He went, and when the medium had concluded his address, ascended the platform and made such a crushing reply to all that had been said that the audience broke out into a perfect torrent of cheers of approval. Beginning by asserting that he obtained his light and knowledge from a better source than feeble men, even from God's pure Word, he went on to quote passage after passage with such earnestness and power that the spiritualist was utterly confounded, and the audience fairly carried away with enthusiasm. The affair, however, did not end there, for the medium was so impressed with what the young preacher had said, that he attended Newtown church, renounced his spiritualism, and became an earnest Christian.

The memory of Bryan Roe's brief ministry in Macclesfield is still green in the people's mind, and to this day, I am told, they talk of the wonderful revival that broke out under his effective preaching. Later on in the year he found greater scope for his evangelistic gifts, and owing to the sudden breakdown in health of Mr. William Sampson, was called upon to conduct special services in Lincolnshire. He was



engaged at first merely for a few days, but so great was the success attending his efforts that he continued in the work for several months, and hundreds of converts were gathered into the churches. "At Alford," writes the Rev. Mark Davenport, "the whole town was stirred, the chapel was crowded every night, and large numbers passed into the enquiry-room deeply concerned for the salvation of their souls. He also conducted a mission among the scattered population in the marshes, where the causes had dwindled to a very low ebb, and by which they were considerably revived and permanently enlarged."

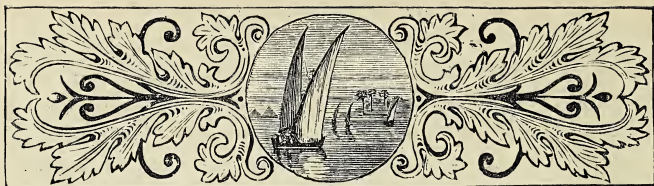
In 1883 he was again recommended as a candidate from the Alford Circuit, and entered Richmond College as a missionary student. I have before me a record of appointments and results during the two years he spent there. It is most remarkable reading, and shows that hardly a Sunday passed by without some persons being converted to God under his earnest and effective preaching. Barnes appears to have been his first appointment, and the record states that seventeen adults decided for Christ. A few weeks later he preached at Plaistow, near where his brother, the Rev. David Roe, was stationed, and the remark in the record is: "About 100 saved. Glory!" "I remember that Sunday night," said Mr. David Roe to me. "Bryan came in rather late, and I asked him where he had been until that time. 'I have been at the chapel,' he replied. 'I could not get away, and scores of men and women have been converted.' He almost wept for joy as he said it, and long into the night I heard him giving audible expressions of praise unto God."

Almost every Sunday his services were requisi-



tioned, and a proof of his popularity may be gathered from the fact that he hardly ever preached in a place without a request being preferred to the college governor that he might be sent there again soon. The record seems to indicate that the governor lent a kindly ear to these requests, for the same places appear again and again in its pages. Popularity, however, did not spoil him as it might have done a weaker-minded and less earnest man. The Rev. D. Sanderson, governor of the college, states that Bryan was ever a careful and diligent student, standing high in the classes and the estimation of the tutors. Among the men he was a universal favourite, and held at one time the highly honourable office of college "policeman"; while on the cricket and football fields he showed that his piety and deep earnestness had in no wise emasculated him, nor turned him into a "kid-glove and lavender-water" Christian.





### CHAPTER III.

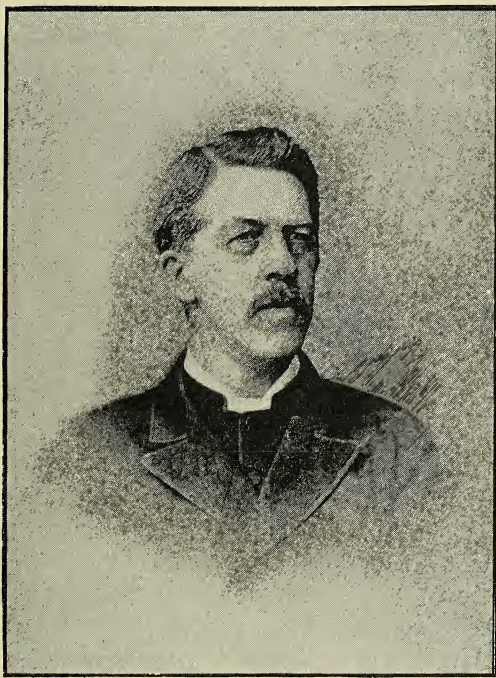
APPOINTED TO AFRICA — THE VOYAGE OUT —  
MADEIRA—CANARY—SIERRA LEONE—KROOMEN.

AT the Conference of 1885 Bryan Roe received his appointment to Africa, being designated for work in connection with our mission stations in the Nupe country, on the banks of the Niger. His success as a soul winner might have led him to suppose that home mission work in English circuits would be more suited to his talents, but being impressed with the idea that God had called him to the foreign field he volunteered his services for Western Africa. It is a difficult matter for those who have never lived in that fever-stricken spot to fully understand the deadly nature of the climate. "Europeans cannot work in such a climate," says the Rev. Thomas Champness, himself a returned West African missionary, "without great peril to health and life, and the circuits which God has given to us have been won at the cost of many valuable lives."

No one knew more of this peril than Bryan Roe, and had he not known there was no lack of Job's comforters to impart the knowledge to him. "You

will be dead in three months," was the cheerful assurance he received from one prophet of evil.

"Well," was his reply, "I had better die in Africa doing my duty than live in England neglecting it."



REV. J. T. F. HALLIGEY.

But I have no fear. So long as God has work for me to do I shall live. I am immortal until my work is done, and when a man's work is done it is time for him to go home."

He was ordained in Liverpool on October 9th,

1885, and on the following day sailed for Lagos, per s.s. *Congo*, in company with the Revs. J. T. F. Halligey, chairman of the district, and M. J. Elliot.

The first voyage out is always attended with interest and excitement to the young missionary as well as to the young mariner. The sorrow of home-leaving is somewhat lessened by the thoughts of the land that lies before him, and of the work to be done there in the name of Christ the Lord. There is so much novelty and strangeness in the situation that grief at leaving behind old friends and familiar faces is for the time forgotten.

The *Congo* sailed at 11.30 in the morning, a heavy fog obscuring everything from sight at the time, and the ship steamed slowly along at the rate of about two knots an hour. The air was filled with strange and hideous noises, the soul-thrilling shriek of the silver-toned (?) syren, the shrill scream of the steam whistle, and the harsh clanging of bells from the vessels near at hand, making the welkin ring again. The *Congo* was by no means the least offender in this respect, and ever and anon the sound of its steam buzzer smote upon the ear with disastrous effect to one's moral nature, the language indulged in by some of the passengers being something to be lamented over. Towards evening the fog lifted, and the old Welsh hills, tipped with a blood-tinged gold, looked glorious in the soft, rosy radiance of the setting sun. Then the moon crept out, and its sheening light seemed to scatter leagues of silver on the heaving, throbbing bosom of the restless sea. The silent stars were lighted one by one, and as they twinkled brightly above in their dark grey setting they carried a gleam of comfort into many a home-



sick heart. "It is all right," they seemed to be saying, with a friendly sort of wink, "we are coming with you. You are not leaving *all* your old friends behind."

Of course there was a poet on board to interpret all this to the passengers. He was a fat man, dressed in an ill-fitting suit of clothes, which smelt very strongly of cheap cigars and snuff. He looked anything but a poet, and the passengers mistook him for a very prosperous manufacturer of pork pies and sausages. He struck an attitude as he gazed rapturously on the panoramic picture passing by, and demanded to know, in a loud voice, "What did the passengers want more than that for their money? Where was the artist that could paint a scene like that? Come now, where was he?"

None of the passengers could tell him, and somewhat saddened by their lack of knowledge, he went on, "I could gaze on this scene all night. I want nothing more. This is enough for me——" At that moment the dinner gong sounded, and the satisfied poet was among the first to answer its summons.

By the time the average passenger has got over the ill effects of *mal-de-mer*, and gained a faint idea of how to walk along the deck without bruising himself against the bulwarks, Madeira is reached, and among the beauties of this paradise of the Atlantic home-sickness takes its departure.

A visit to the shore is indispensable, and always attended with some element of excitement. The method of landing has about it all the charms of primitiveness, the passengers embarking in shore boats going in stern first, and clambering over the shingle as best they can. In rough weather the

process is slightly altered, and to avoid the possibility of an involuntary surf bath, the boat stops short of the shore, and the rest of the journey is made on the sturdy shoulders of the pirates of these regions—I mean boatmen, who hand the hapless passengers over to the tender mercies of the Portuguese brigands, commonly known as guides. Strangely enough though these men speak English fairly fluently, they cannot for the life of them understand what “Go away, we don’t need you,” means. Tell them that, and they grin most intelligently. “Yes, señor,” they reply, “of course we know the way to the fruit market. Follow us.”

“We don’t want you ; clear out,” shout the passengers furiously, and a smile more intelligent than ever illuminates their benevolent countenances.

“Oh,” they remark softly, “the post office first ! Certainly ! Come this way, señor.”

To avoid further trouble the passengers surrender at discretion, and are evermore pestered and tormented by these nineteenth century highwaymen, who take them everywhere but where they want to go, and compel them to buy at ruinous prices articles that are of next to no use to them.

It is a problem that would puzzle the mind of a mathematician to find out from a given number of tourists the number of guides they will be assailed and captured by. Guides seem to flourish as the wicked are said to flourish, and their business is one of the staple industries of the place, though it is hard pressed by the ancient and honourable profession of begging. Beggars and guides, it has been said, are two of the sights of Madeira—to be avoided.

It is no uncommon thing to be followed about by

shoals of beggars, most of them suffering from unsightly diseases, which they thrust persistently before the people's notice with clamorous appeals for alms. Others, unable on account of their helpless condition to parade the streets, haunt the churches and other places of public resort, and exhibit their hideous deformities. Even the prisoners in gaol feel called upon to beg, and, from their narrow windows overlooking the street, vie with the halt, the maimed, and the blind in the pathos of their terms in soliciting a stray copper. Their evident earnestness is enough to create a belief that begging is the one Portuguese profession worth following. It is only the number of genial guides that saves one from such a belief.

After leaving Madeira the *Congo's* course lay to the southward for two or three days, Canary being the next stopping-place, and lying off in the bay the hills of Teneriffe could be discerned in the far distance, the famous Peak, with its crest clothed in perennial snow, towering high above the rest, and shining diamond-like beneath the glittering rays of the bright sun.

As soon as the anchor was dropped the steamer was boarded by a chattering band of swarthy vendors of cigars, canaries, fruit, and Florida water, and a perfect pandemonium of haggling ensued. High prices prevailed at the outset, but they gradually fell lower and lower, until, by the time the "blue peter" was hoisted, articles were offered at less than half the sum demanded at first.

The history of Grand Canary extends back over four hundred years, and the place obtains its name, according to the Jesuit tradition, because Almighty

God created it to be the head of the other six Fortunate Islands.

Of course, our missionary party felt themselves called upon to pay a visit to the great Roman Catholic cathedral, built many years ago out of lava stone. It is one of the principal sights of Las Palmas, and its massive, dimly-lit interior, with here and there a kneeling worshipper, was strangely impressive to the three Christian workers. Large oil paintings, some by old masters, and representing various scenes in the life of our Lord and His apostles, were conspicuously displayed upon the walls, each one being surmounted by a gilt cross, and having beneath a miniature altar. Confessional boxes stood in various odd nooks and corners, and ever and anon our visitors came across some poor penitent pouring out her tale of sins and sorrows into the sympathetic ears of a comfortable-looking, stout old priest.

Just across the road there is the huge museum, chiefly remarkable, I suppose, for its immense collection of skulls, a whole wall of those ghastly relics of a dead generation being there exhibited. To men of morbid tastes Las Palmas is a delightful place, and they may absolutely revel in a visit to the cemetery where mummies, skeletons, and skulls are to be seen by the bushel. "Corpses there," says Mr. Halligey, "are deposited in frail chests filled with lime. In a short time all that remains of the body is its framework, which is then thrown out unceremoniously into the common heap, and the bones of old and young, of virtuous and evil, mingle in unrecognisable confusion."

Bull-baiting and cock-fighting seem to be the principal pastimes indulged in by the gentle Spaniard,



and an immense square just outside the town is consecrated to the service of the former noble sport.

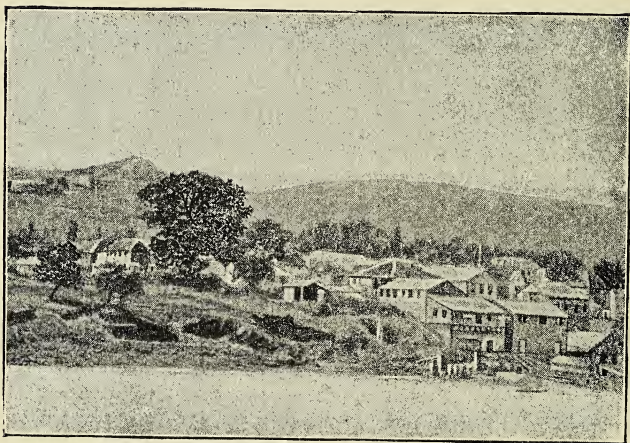
Cock-fighting is invariably reserved as a relaxation from the more serious duties of the Sabbath day, and after church is over the pit is usually filled with a crowd of pious spectators, who are prepared to stake anything from a pound of young potatoes to a pile of old pesetas on their favourite bird.

It is interesting to note that one of the principal articles of commerce imported into Canary is soap. What becomes of it all is shrouded in impenetrable mystery, for the common or garden Spaniard's general appearance persuades me that he uses but little of it except at holiday times, when he undergoes a complete transformation, and comes out in a garb of gayest hues to enter upon the many enjoyments provided.

Freetown, Sierra Leone, was the *Congo's* next stopping place, and she arrived there early one morning amid a drenching downpour of rain. But in spite of this there was the usual crowd of crazy-looking boats, with their noisy, quarrelsome proprietors, who pestered the passengers with a view to getting them ashore in their crafts. Each man's boat, of course, is a trim-built wherry, and miles better in every respect than any other; possessing cleaner seats and greater sailing powers, "and the fare, massa, be sixpence, only sixpence." By some means or other they found out that our party were Wesleyans, and immediately they all professed to be members of the Methodist Church. "I go for Wesleyan Church, sah," they cried in unison, "I be a Wesleyan, and my fader, he be a Wesleyan befo' me. You go for my boat, sah; you go for de Wesleyan boat." The language indulged in towards each other by these

amiable individuals did not impress the missionaries with any great ideas of their fellow churchmen's piety. It was more expressive than polite, and led, in one instance, to a friendly exchange of blows with boat oars between two ardent Methodists.

Freetown lies at the base of a high ridge of hills, which gives the name, Sierra Leone (Ridge of



FREETOWN, SIERRA LEONE.

Lions) to the country. The town was founded a century ago as a home for liberated slaves, whose descendants still constitute the principal part of the population. Viewed from the sea the place realises one's ideas of what an African paradise ought to be, but, though exposed to the fresh breezes of the Atlantic, it is so unhealthy that it has earned for itself the gruesome title of the White Man's Grave.

It is built with a certain amount of regularity, the streets being at right angles to each other. The

houses for the most part are solid, substantial structures, built of stone, and are surrounded with piazzas and verandahs. In the lower quarters, or slums, the buildings are mostly huts,<sup>1</sup> painted in all manner of gaudy hues.

The principal occupation of the negroes seems to be shopkeeping. Many streets are entirely filled with shops apparently doing no business ; for, go when you will, you hardly ever come across a customer. "The instinct of trade," says a writer, "seems to be inherent among West Africans; from the child hawking cakes about the streets to the grown-up man or woman with basket or little shanty all are engaged in selling their wares. Pen cannot describe the condition of some of the streets—every house a shop, and every shop a bazaar ; while the footway is lined with squatting vendors of cooked or uncooked provisions. The jostling crowd is full of others, perambulating to and fro, uttering shrill cries of the nature, price, and quality of their wares."

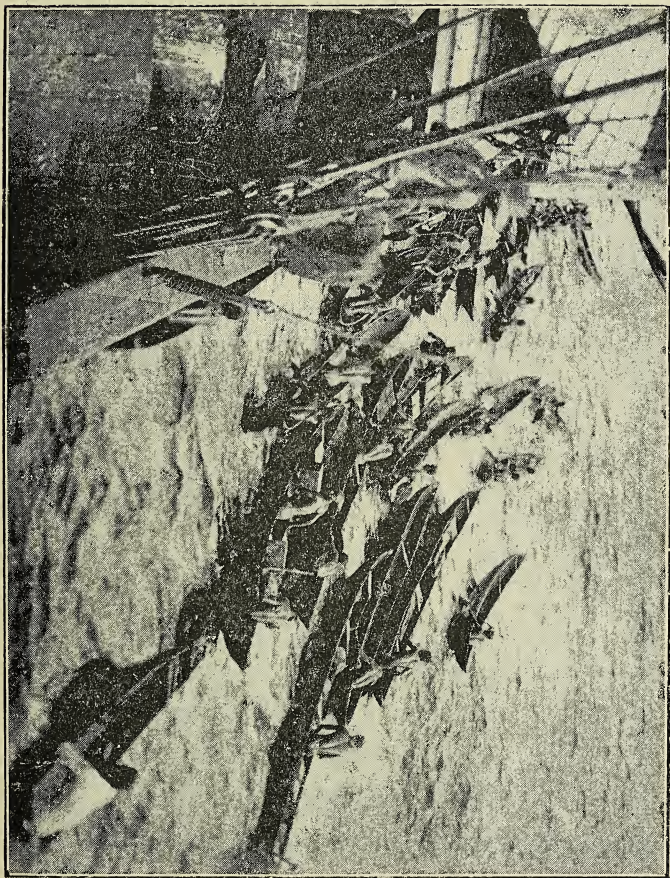
A couple of days were spent in Freetown, and then once more the anchor was hoisted and the good ship *Congo* steamed gaily away for Lagos, with which place Mr. Roe was hereafter to be so much associated. *En route* a stoppage was made on the Kroo coast to take on board a band of swarthy bravoës, who engaged to assist in unloading and loading the vessel at the various ports of call. Without the services of the Kroomen it is difficult to know how that work could be done. They travel with the ship as far as she goes on her outward voyage, and leave on her return to their native country. They generally come on board with all their earthly belongings wrapped up in a sheet of brown paper, but ere they leave their possessions

have swollen to such prodigious proportions that they need to be carried off in boxes. It is not for me to suggest how they come by all their property, and I will content myself by remarking that they seem to have reduced the practice of annexing other people's articles to a science. Their talent in that direction is such that it would have called forth the slavish admiration of Charlie Bates and the Artful Dodger.

When a steamer approaches within three or four miles of the Kroo coast a gun is fired as a signal to those on shore that men are wanted, and soon the sea is covered with frail dug-outs, looking like so many storm-birds rising and falling with every motion of the waves. Once alongside a scene of great animation is witnessed. Such shrieking, howling, and fighting, in order to gain the deck, cannot be described with pen and ink. A bargain is then struck between the captain and the head-man of some gang or other, and the steamer proceeds on her way, followed by the bitter anathemas of those that are left behind. Throughout the voyage they are comparatively quiet and well-behaved, but when they are nearing home again they grow very excited and prepare for leaving the ship. "These preparations," says Mr. Halligey, in his entertaining lecture on "The Gold Coast," "include a much-needed ablution, the packing and cording of their boxes and other effects, and the adornment of their persons with bright-coloured handkerchiefs and stylish hats; their hair is dressed in a most taking manner, and brass pans, kegs of powder, cases of gin, packages of cloth, and other goods are stowed just by the bulwarks in readiness for the canoes. Soon these are alongside, and a perfect pandemonium ensues.

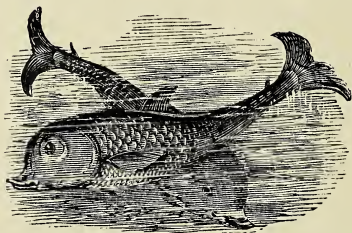


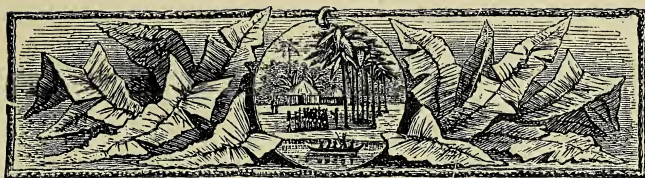
KROO-BOYS IN CANOES.



Canoes collide and upset, men jump overboard in their new clothes, spoiling the brilliant patterns, and, apparently as much at home in the water as on land, squabble and fight in tempestuous outcries and vigorous blows."

The names these coolies of the West Coast adopt on entering the white man's employ are sometimes dazzling, and always remarkable. Gladstone, John Wesley, Prince of Wales, Beaconsfield, are frequently met with, while among the more common cognomens we find Half Dollar, Jumbo, Whisky-Boy, Amen, Tommy Atkins, Sponge, and Saltbox. "One Kroo man, with a proper appreciation of the relative value of himself, his wife, and their son, called the youth Twelve-and-Six, the lady One Pound Five, while he appraised his own worth by the figures of Two Pounds Ten."





## CHAPTER IV.

### LAGOS—REVIVAL WORK—OSHODI.

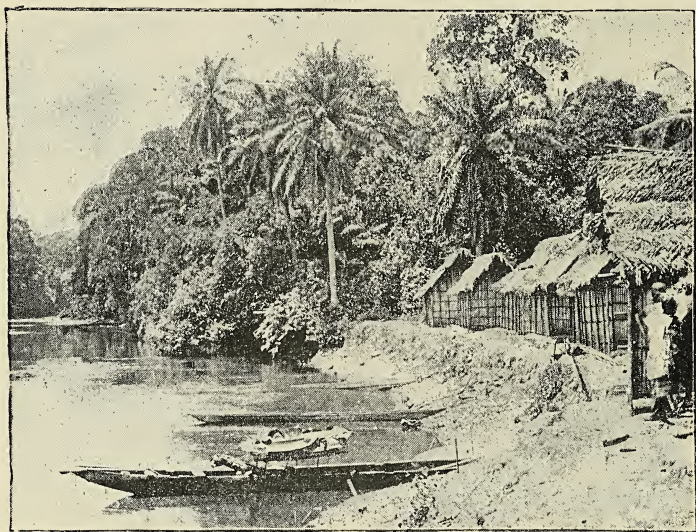
AT the present day, Lagos is one of the most flourishing of our West African colonies. Forty or fifty years ago it was the great depôt of the West African slave-market. Slaves from the mainland were brought down here, bartered for tobacco, cloth, and notions to Portuguese dealers, and transported to America and the West Indies amid all the oft-told horrors of the middle passage. In 1861, by a treaty of cession signed by the native king, Dosomu, Lagos and its dependencies became British territory, the permanent occupation of the island being deemed by our Government absolutely necessary for the complete suppression of the slave-trade in the Bight of Benin, as well as for the protection and development of British commerce. Its insular position and the easy means of communication with the interior have greatly helped to expand the trade of the Great Yoruba country, and to make Lagos a most important commercial centre.

Up to 1861, Lagos was looked upon as a veritable sink of iniquity, a hotbed of fever, and a nest of slavery. Apart from the traffic in human beings,



there was little or no commercial activity, the legitimate trade amounting to something over £130,000 per annum, and the town consisted of a mass of rotten shanties, with a few well-built barracoons, often crowded with manacled slaves, dotted here and there.

In 1890 the trade of the port had swollen to



A WEST AFRICAN VILLAGE.

nearly a million and a half sterling, and the slave traffic was a thing unknown, while the appearance of the town itself had so altered that it bore no resemblance whatever to the Lagos of thirty-five years ago, its sea wall and wharves and jetties, its great warehouses, offices, and stately residences; its beautiful churches with towers, clocks, and evanishing spires,



all presenting an aspect which our general ideas of West African towns do not lead us to expect.

Our work at Lagos is really an offshoot from the Gold Coast Mission, and was commenced, I believe, by the late Rev. T. B. Freeman, of Ashanti fame, about the year 1852. From a small station it has grown into the head of an extensive district, including the Great Yoruba and Popo countries. In the Lagos Circuit alone there are four handsome chapels, two mission halls, several out-stations, a high school for boys (and another for girls in course of erection), several elementary day schools with some hundreds of scholars, and a membership of nearly two thousand. There are three native ministers employed in the work of the circuit, two others engaged in scholastic duties at the high school, and a dozen or more lay agents and school teachers, the entire cost almost being defrayed by the people themselves, the only help received from the English missionary funds being a diminishing high-school grant which has nearly reached the vanishing point. Surely we may well exclaim, "What hath God wrought?"

It is interesting to know that on the site of the Fagi chapel, one of the first built in Lagos, there stood less than forty years ago an idol temple, where human sacrifices were frequently offered.

Bryan Roe landed in Lagos early in December, 1885, and on bended knee consecrated his life to Africa's salvation. Owing to tribal wars, he was not able to proceed at once to his station on the Niger, and several months were spent waiting for the way to be opened. The time, however, was by no means wasted. His earnest evangelistic spirit was not content to merely wait, while souls around him were

perishing day by day, and he commenced holding revival services in the various churches. The success attending them was most astonishing, scores of converts, many from among the heathen, being made. "I remember one night in particular," says Mr. Halligey, "when he returned home exhausted with his efforts, but exulting with beaming face and rapturous gratitude over an unusually gracious time and a rich harvest of souls."

His next move was a series of short missionary journeys to the farms and villages in the immediate hinterland of Lagos, being accompanied on them by a Mr. George, who acted as interpreter. What he witnessed produced a very saddening effect upon his mind, and determined him more and more to devote the talents God had given him to bring about a better state of affairs.

His route led him through half-a-dozen villages, with populations of from four to five hundred, and in only one of them did he find a Christian teacher; the other five were absolutely ignorant of Jesus Christ. This would not have surprised him had he been in the far interior, but he was within reasonable distance of Lagos—Christian Lagos—where the Gospel had been proclaimed to, and accepted by, thousands for over thirty years. That was the terrible fact which cut him to the heart. If the spreading of the knowledge of the Lord was to be so slow, when, oh, when would Africa be won for Christ? And if the work were to be confined exclusively to Europeans, upon whom the climate had such terrible effects, would it ever be accomplished?

All along the route evidences of the most primitive and ignorant heathen worship were manifest—offerings of cowries, rice, palm oil, and mangoes to the

god of small-pox, viz., an ant-hill ; “and this,” he exclaimed, “within ten miles of Lagos, within sound almost of its church bells.”

At Yaba he visited an old fetish priest, and with more zeal than discretion, perhaps, demanded to know



ANT-HILL.

the reason why he worshipped such filthy and abominable things.

“Ah,” replied the old man with a cunning leer, “I don’t worship them ; I have more sense. But the people worship them, and believe in them, and I make my living out of their belief.”

In the midst of the dense darkness, however, he

found some cheering gleams of light, for at Mofolookoo he came across a neat church, and a fairly numerous company of believers. These had not been gathered together without hard work, and the encountering of strong opposition. It had been the custom of the catechist stationed there to preach in the most central position of the town, which happened to be nearly opposite a large devil house. The officiating priest of this satanic edifice did not greatly appreciate the catechist's efforts, and, growing angry, probably at the loss of customers, he ordered him to come there no more. On receiving a refusal he waxed more wroth than ever, and promised he would soon bring to nought all attempts to Christianise the people. The agent replied to him in the memorable language of Gamaliel, "If this counsel or this work be of men it will come to nought, but if it be of God ye cannot overthrow it." The fetish priest, however, thought otherwise. He imagined he could, and went about the business in the usual orthodox way. In the very midst of his charms and incantations death suddenly laid its hand upon him, and so impressed were the populace by this unexpected event that when Mr. Roe arrived at the place a few days later he found the people in a measure prepared to listen to him.

"I stood on the dead priest's grave," he says, "with his ghastly fetish in my hand, and pointed out the folly of fighting against God. I trod upon the temple in which the enemy of mankind had been worshipped, and gave out the hymn :

"Jesus ! the name high over all,  
In hell, or earth, or sky ;  
Angels and men before it fall  
And devils fear and fly.



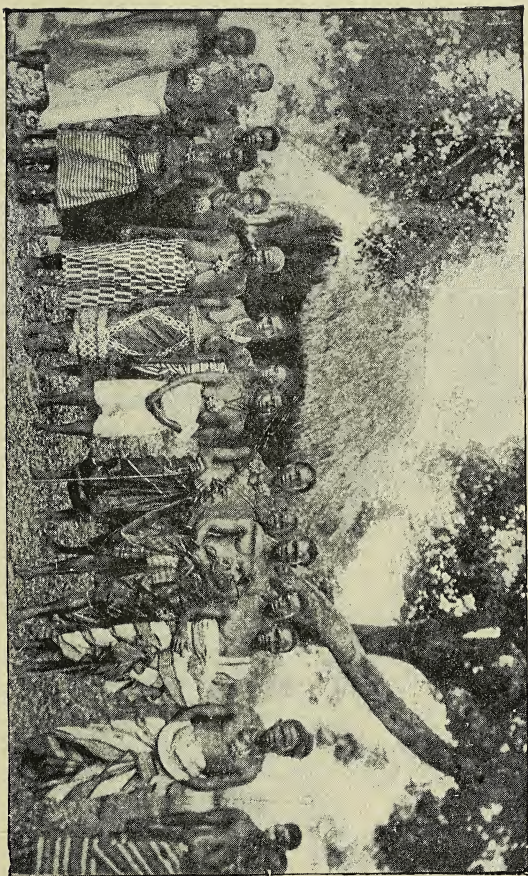


DEVIL PRIEST.

“Surely the day dawns!”

He intended returning to Lagos from Mofoloo-koo, and was just on the point of starting, when a deputation arrived from Oshodi, begging him to visit that place, as the people there knew nothing of Christ, having no teacher, no church, and no school. They pleaded so hard that Mr. Roe felt that he had no option but to go; and he went. His first congregation was a crowd of native boys and girls playing about on the sand in undress uniform, rolling and tumbling over each other in great glee; but on catching sight of the missionary party, off they scuttled in fearful terror, for never before had they gazed on the face of a white man. Curiosity, however, got the better of fright, and cautiously they crept back to see and hear. By-and-by they became quite eager to get near and touch the white hand of the man from whom they had so recently run in such great fear.

In the afternoon a council was held by the headmen of the place to discuss whether the missionaries should be allowed to settle permanently in their midst. Of course the fetish priests stoutly opposed their remaining; but they were overruled, and an agent was subsequently sent from Lagos to reside there. So well did the work prosper that in less than six months Mr. Roe went up again to open a newly-built church and baptize many newly-made converts. The church was a curious building, having mud walls, mud benches, a mud pulpit, and a grass-covered roof; but the Christians were nevertheless very proud of it, and as Mr. Roe heard the school children read and sing he forgot all about the poverty-stricken appearance of the building, and found as much enjoyment in the services as if he had been in the finest cathedral.



A GROUP OF FETISH PRIESTS AND PEOPLE.



The fetish priests began to see that unless they bestirred themselves they would very soon be left without any followers at all, and accordingly met in solemn conclave and resolved to strike a sturdy blow for the honour of their gods. They commenced operations by sending a message to the catechist, advising him to leave the town, as Shango, the god of thunder, had communicated to them the fearful fact that he was tired of tolerating Christianity, and was on the eve of showing his displeasure in a very tragic form. The agent happened to be the wrong sort of man to talk to in that fashion. He was willing to listen to reason, but refused to be bullied or bluffed. His strong faith in the power of God was not to be shaken by a blustering message, and he sent word back to the priests that he would soon show them who was the stronger—Shango or the mighty God he worshipped. "To-morrow," he said, "you shall know who is the Lord." Calling his people together he taught them the few lines of a hymn of his own composing and started off for the Shango quarter of the town. Here a great crowd of heathen were gathered, armed with stout clubs, and determined to give the Christians a sound thrashing, but, marvellously enough, when the Christians began to sing and pray the effect produced was so profound that the angry mob gradually melted away, and the agent was left in possession of the ground.

"I will preach here again this evening," he boldly announced, at which the Babalawo, or high priest of Ifa, another celebrated African deity, gnashed his teeth with rage.

"You come," he said warningly, "and I and my people will flog the life out of you and your people."



Others standing by made a similar promise, and the handful of Christians grew desponding and fearful.

"Let us abandon this," they advised, "no good can come of it."

But the catechist stood firm to the position he had taken up. He felt convinced that a climax had been reached, and that to turn back would be disastrous. He was prepared to burn his boats and make retreat impossible.

"Wait, brothers, wait," he cried encouragingly, "for to-day you shall know who is the true and living God. He is not asleep; His open eye is upon us, and His help will be forthcoming this evening, even as it was this morning. He has delivered us once, and will do so again."

When night came the faithful few assembled again in fear and trembling. The catechist with undaunted heart prayed and began to preach, and as he did so, the Babalawo, arrayed in all the glory of his priestly office, came forth from his quarters, followed by an immense crowd of infatuated adherents. Tom-toms were beaten, horns were blown, and loud shouts indulged in; but what alarmed the Christians more than these noisy demonstrations, was the very significant manner in which sundry clubs of formidable size and shape were waved in the air. Encouraged by the catechist, however, in whose eye the fire of a holy enthusiasm glowed, they held their ground and began to sing. Nearer and nearer came the howling mob, brandishing their whips and clubs, and intimating by word and gesture what short work they were going to make of the feeble band in front of them. Their loud, swelling words were accompanied by the indescribable music of the tom-toms and horns,

and the poor Christians thought that their last hour had come. But as in the days of Wesley, when God often changed the hearts of men from rage and anger to kindness and tenderness, so here a magical transformation was effected in the mind of the Babalawo. No sooner did he come within sound of the Christian voices, lifted up in holy hymns to God, than his whole disposition seemed to change, and to the intense astonishment of all present he commanded his followers to cease their noise and listen to what the Christians had to say. Then, ranging himself by the catechist's side, he said, "Baba (father), preach on, for I feel you are preaching a true word. Let no man dare disturb you, lest I punish him as I had intended to punish you."

His authority in the place was so great that the valiant defenders of the native gods were sadly abashed, and hid their death-dealing clubs behind their backs in dread.

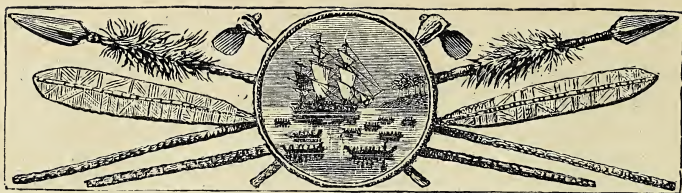
That very night a violent tornado swept over the town, accompanied by heavy thunder and lightning. Many houses were hurled to the ground, others were burnt down, and among the number was the house of the Shango priest, who had professed but the day before to be able to catch the wind in his hand and compel it to do what he liked. The little church and mission-house were left untouched by the storm, as were the dwellings of all the Christians.

Some materialistic minds may assert that this was merely the result of chance. I am old-fashioned enough to believe that it was the direct result of the providence of God, and that He who fought for Israel in Egypt, and for Elijah against the priests of Baal on Mount Carmel so many thousands of years ago,

fought that night for His little band of trembling believers in that African town of Oshodi.

At any rate the incident had a most potent influence upon the minds of many heathen, and not long after Mr. Roe baptized forty adults, and received them into Church fellowship. The work was more firmly established than ever, and Oshodi became one of the brightest spots among the home mission stations of the Lagos Circuit.





## CHAPTER V.

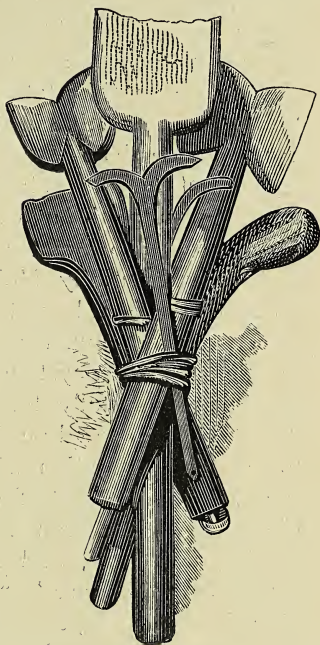
### A JOURNEY TO THE NIGER—EVILS OF THE DRINK TRAFFIC—A WONDERFUL WOMAN.

THE work of our Missionary Society on the Niger was commenced at the invitation of the Niger Company, but was not continued long. The records of the mission are few and far between, and it does not appear that it was at any time a successful enterprise. Quite a combination of circumstances stood in the way. To begin with, the stations were too far away from other parts of the district, and consequently too expensive. Then petty tribal wars constantly interrupted the work, while in times of peace the chiefs were continually demanding “dashes,” *i.e.*, presents, from the missionary. “When they are not employed in plundering one another,” says one of the agents, “they join forces to plunder us.” Further, the Church Missionary Society was already established in the same neighbourhood, and finding that the work of the two Societies almost overlapped, it was thought advisable to withdraw, which was done in 1886, the men employed being set to work in the interior of the Yoruba country.

Mr. Roe, as intimated previously, was originally



designed for the Niger mission, but was afterwards transferred to Lagos and Little Popo. His goods, however, having been forwarded on to the Niger, he found it necessary to make a journey thither in order to recover them, and accordingly took ship for Akassa. With Akassa he was compelled to confess himself disappointed. He had pictured to himself a large and well-built town, better in appearance even than Lagos. To his surprise it turned out to be a sandbank, on which the National African Trading Company had built a couple of capacious warehouses for their Niger trade, and forming the central depôt for the whole river.



SHANGO CLUBS.\*

Opposite the upper wharf the steamer lay anchored for three long days and dreary nights. From the account furnished us by Mr. Roe life does not appear to have been a pleasant thing for the few white men on the spot, which abounded with mosquitoes and sand-flies, while the climate was quite as treacherous as farther north. Added to all this the natives in the neighbourhood were not of the most desirable type, and apparently found much pleasure

in taking pot-shots at the white men whenever opportunities occurred. While Mr. Roe was there one of the company's agents was killed by a poisoned arrow, and these unpleasant messengers were generally found flying around from either side of the river whenever the white men's boat appeared in sight. This uncomfortable state of affairs had arisen chiefly from the depreciation in the value of palm oil, though, doubtless, the haughty and occasionally high-handed conduct of the traders had something to do with it.

The country through which the Upper Niger runs was described to Mr. Roe as being densely populated, and almost entirely Mohammedan, many of them recent converts and great fanatics. Roman Catholics were pouring in men and money in a most lavish manner, and their system of buying hearers seems to have been very fully developed. To such an extent had this been carried on that it was almost impossible to get a congregation without paying for it. One trader gave me a part of a conversation he overheard the other day between a certain missionary, bent on gaining adherents, and some natives. "Will you come to the mission?" "Oh, yes; we will come to-night." According to promise they went. Two days later the same question was asked, but the answer was somewhat different. "Why should we come to your mission? We are no better off for it. You give us no chop (*i.e.* food). You give us no cloth. You give us no gin. You give us nothing but palaver. Why should we come? Give us chop, cloth, gin, rum, and we come to hear you as long as you like; if not, palaver set" (*i.e.* the matter is ended). The following anecdote told of a R. C. missionary out there illustrates the point very finely. He resolved to teach the

natives a higher Christianity, and said : "We will make no more gifts, no more rum, blankets, and tobacco." The king, wearing a brass plate announcing his dignity, approached the missionary, and enquired : "No more blankets?" The missionary replied, "No." "No more baccy?" "No." "No more rum?" "No." "Then," said the king, drawing himself up to his full height and looking scornfully at the missionary, "all right ; good-day. No more Alleluias !"

On his journey along the different creeks and rivers, the sights Mr. Roe witnessed were sickening in the extreme. What aroused his ire most of all was the fact that almost the only articles given in exchange for native produce were gin, rum, guns, powder, and such like. "Without gin," he states, "the West African may indeed be a savage, but with it he is a demon. May God help us in the bitter struggle against this fearful curse of West African trading !"

It is impossible to exaggerate the evil results of the drink traffic on the West Coast, especially in the region of the Niger, the wretched tribes there having reached a depth of degradation that is truly appalling. Towns like Bonny and Brass are almost given over to drinking, gin and rum being sold at every few yards in the open streets. We speak with horror of the slave trade, in which our forefathers played so prominent a part, but in this notorious gin trade we have something well worthy of being classed with it. It is idle to talk of civilising the negro, and introducing the blessings of European commerce, while we continue to pour into Western Africa incredible quantities of gin, rum, gunpowder, and guns. It is well-nigh impossible to propagate Gospel truths

among a people who are generally found in a state of semi-intoxication ; and so long as the detested drink-traffic exists the Church of Christ cannot hope for the success she aims at. Commerce, too, suffers from it to a marvellous extent, for it has been found that the natives who care for gin care little for anything else, and have little to give for that which is profitable to us and themselves. Strong drink is simply swallowing up legitimate commerce. I have seen it stated that a Glasgow firm formerly employed a large number of looms weaving cloth for the African market ; now it has not one. And it is said that a trader in the Calabar River recently wrote home to his principals to send no more cloth—drink was the only article in demand. “In all its effects, moral and economical,” says the Rev. Hugh Goldie, for forty years a missionary at Old Calabar, “this traffic is only evil ; impeding the work of the Church at home, marring her mission work abroad, and destroying beneficial industry. The Christian community in past times aroused the nation to abolish the slave trade and slavery in British territory. A like task is now before it, the awakening of the nation to abolish this drink traffic.”

With these facts before us we cannot wonder that the spirit of Mr. Roe was roused within him as he viewed the enormous difficulties in the way of the work to which he had consecrated his life.

“As we passed from place to place,” he writes, “we found that each had a history of its own, and what a history ! Every place seemed to have its Aceldama. At Brass the field of sacrifice was pointed out where human sacrifices had so recently been made that, in spite of the bleaching and cleansing power of sun and



wind, bones and skulls alike were still pestiferous. A little lower down the coast was pointed out the spot where a horrible cannibal feast of prisoners of war was held a few weeks before ; and so the dark, dark history goes on until we feel sick at heart, and cry, 'How long, O Lord, how long?' When will the day break? When will the triumphant song of our Lord be sung over this heathen land? Doubt says, 'Never.' Faith says, 'Soon.' Ay! as soon as the Church is ready, for He, whom John saw, is ready to come forth and lead His followers 'conquering and to conquer.' Thank God the glimmer of the breaking day is even now discernible in the far eastern sky, and the tune of the great triumph song is being slowly learnt."

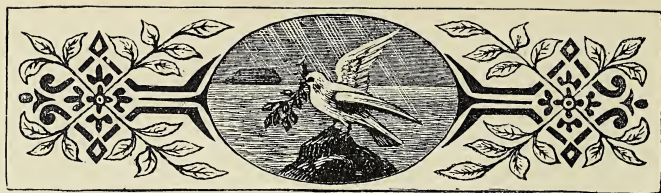
The cause of this last assertion was doubtless owing to a most remarkable negress whom he met on his journey. She was well advanced in years, and held the position of private secretary to King Ja Ja, of Opobo. Her influence over the monarch was so great that in many matters of state he was entirely guided by her counsel, and her position might better be described as that of prime minister. To Mr. Roe's great astonishment she professed to be a Methodist, and after hearing the story of her life, which was wonderfully romantic, he was obliged to confess himself surprised that so much real good remained in the woman, though there were many things in her conduct he highly disapproved of. It appears that she was born of slave parents in Louisville, Kentucky, U.S.A., and was converted in early life at a Methodist camp meeting. After the war which set the slaves at liberty her parents emigrated to the newly-established colony for African freed men, Liberia, and she was taken with them. Being of a somewhat adventurous

disposition she took to trading on her own account, and made several journeys along the coast. Opobo seemed to strike her fancy greatly, and eventually marrying a native of the place, she settled there, and gradually won for herself a prominent position in the town. Her remarkable talents and force of character attracted the king's attention, and she became one of his counsellors. Growing more and more in his good graces she was advanced step by step until she was second only to the king himself, and few enterprises were ever undertaken without her advice being first solicited. Up to the time of Mr. Roe's visit to Opobo no missionary had been allowed to set foot in Ja Ja's dominions; but God was using this woman to prepare the people for the reception of the Gospel when the way should open. In her own way she had been a missionary in the king's own house, and often, in the face of threats and remonstrances, read God's word to the old monarch, who in hours of sickness would constantly ask to be entertained by stories from the Bible. Besides this, without any outside help, she established a school, where some sixty boys and girls were instructed, and so well had they been taught, that Mr. Roe, who was permitted to see samples of their work, unhesitatingly declared that they compared very favourably with English children of the same age.\* God in this manner was using her to prepare His way. She needed but the touch of His hand and the unction of the Spirit to have made her at once a Christian and a heroine indeed.

The journey to and from the Niger was full of incidents, and Mr. Roe reached Lagos again in good health, and with wider views of West Africa's needs than he had before possessed. He had seen the cry-

ing evils that abounded on every hand in the countries where the Gospel had never been proclaimed ; his eyes had been opened to the frightful results of the drink traffic in the interior towns, and he longed for the time to come when reinforcements should arrive at Lagos, and set him free for the work on which his heart was set, and to which he seriously felt God had called him, viz., pioneer labour in the far interior. Sickness and death among his colleagues held him for the time being in Lagos, where much of his time was spent in scholastic duties at the high school, though these did not prevent him devoting some of his energies to evangelistic work in the colony. The needs of the European residents were forcibly impressed upon his mind too, and he organised a series of Sunday afternoon services for white men only. These were a signal success, and it was no uncommon thing to see the room in which the services were held filled with eager listeners to the earnest words of the devoted young missionary.





## CHAPTER VI.

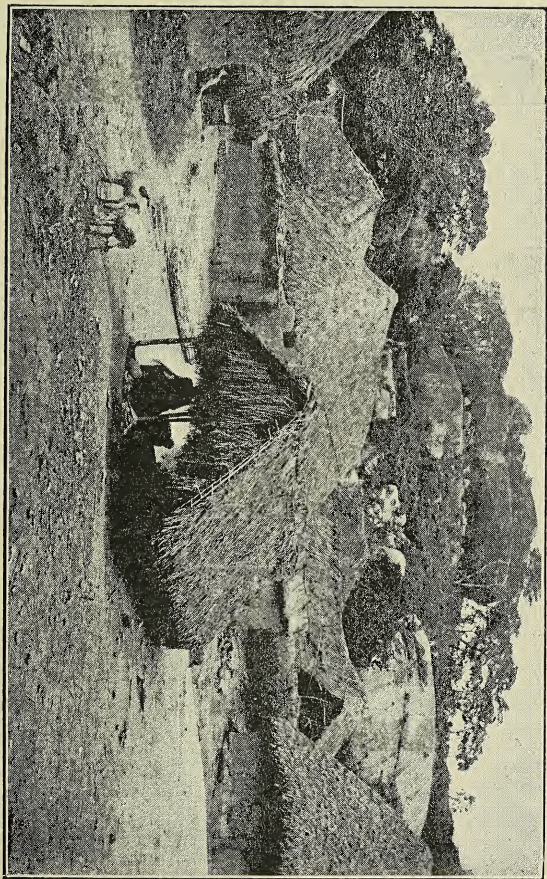
### AN ADVENTURE IN ABEOKUTA.

IN 1887 an incident occurred which well illustrates the difficulty of missionary enterprise in Western Africa. The climate is not the only drawback to successful work ; often treachery and greed, malice and revenge, hinder progress to a heartbreaking degree, and the servant of the Lord occasionally stands in some danger of losing his life by the hand of the assassin.

Early in February, 1887, Mr. Halligey, as Chairman of the District, took Mr. Sutcliffe, who had recently arrived on the coast, up to Abeokuta to introduce him as the new superintendent, and instal him in office. Mr. Roe accompanied them part of the way, but an accident befalling him he was obliged to return to Lagos, and, as events turned out, this was quite providential.

In a village called Obba the missionaries were saluted by the headman with a great display of apparent cordiality, which was, however, merely a blind for meditated mischief. What with loads of books and household utensils belonging to Mr. Sutcliffe the quantity of luggage being carried up





THE GREAT ROCK (OLUMO), ABEOKUTA.

was sufficiently large to arouse this native's cupidity. He felt convinced that in those iron-bound boxes there was much treasure locked up, and he set about to devise ways and means whereby the bulk of it might change ownership. So with beaming smile and honeyed phrase Ola opened his compound to the missionaries, and spoke of the gladness of his heart at having them with him. Mr. Sutcliffe, being new to West African ways, was quite charmed with the warm reception, and told his delight to the more seasoned Chairman, who smiled an enigmatical smile, and softly hummed the well-known ditty, "Will you walk into my parlour? said the spider to the fly," while the headman of the carriers solemnly shook his head and remarked : "That man be plenty big rogue."

"Yes," added Mr. Halligey, "we must keep our weather eye upon him. The language of truthful James may apply to him as well as to the Celestial :

"'Which is why I remark, and my language is plain,  
That for ways that are dark, and for tricks that are vain,  
The heathen Egba is peculiar,  
Which the same I will always maintain.'"

A plot was hatched in the night to surprise the party while asleep, and quietly annex the many boxes stored up against the compound wall. A judicious watch, however, kept by the travellers, and one or two rifles prominently displayed, slightly upset the wily calculations of the genial Ola, and when the party resumed their journey next morning all his amiability had disappeared. He sat at his door with a moody and scowling face, muttering dark threats and shaking his fist at the retreating forms of his much-welcomed guests. Schemes for revenge now occupied his

attention, and concocting a pretty little story, he sent information to the chiefs of Abeokuta that Mr. Halligey was not a missionary, but a military man, who had been to Dahomey teaching their enemies how to fire guns. He begged leave to suggest that the iron-bound boxes should be searched. Ever suspicious and eager with greed, the chiefs readily took the bait, and counselled together as to methods of proceeding. At Obba the reputed value of the treasure borne by the missionaries was £1,000. By the time Abeokuta was reached the estimate had swollen prodigiously, £10,000 being the sum the boxes were said to contain.

It should be explained here that the chiefs of Abeokuta are of two classes; the civil authorities, who are styled Ogbonis, and the military officers, who are called Jagunas, or Baloguns. The Ogbonis constitute the superior order, but it happened that at this time the Baloguns were jealous of and coveted the first position. The strained relations proved to be of immense service to the missionaries, inasmuch as the Ogbonis, to put a spoke in the Baloguns' wheels, became their friends and protectors. The military men, however, grew more and more defiant, and resolved on action.

"At noon on March 3rd," says Mr. Halligey, "one of these men visited us. He was very plausible and pious, and after what seemed quite a friendly conversation, took his leave, saying, 'May God keep you in health and give you peace.' In the meantime the men who accompanied him had been profitably employed in a curious inspection of the premises, but in face of the pious wish recorded above we suspected no evil. Hardly had an hour passed by before we





OGUDIPE AND JAGUNA, OR WAR CHIEF.



heard a sudden shout, and immediately the compound was crowded by a yelling mob of men, armed with guns, clubs, and cutlasses. Without offering any explanation for their visit they carried off four men, who attempted resistance, and about one hundred pounds' worth of property."

Mr. Halligey was not the kind of man to submit quietly to such a raid as this. To "meekly wait and murmur not" was an intolerable policy under the circumstances, and as soon as possible he hastened off to lay the affair before the chief Ogboni, Ogudipe, who had ever proved the trusty friend of the Christians. He had been in his younger days a celebrated warrior, and by his achievements and remarkable force of character had attained to a premier position among the chiefs. Refusing to be crowned king, he adopted a new title—Alatonshe, which signifies a reformer, or one who puts things right.

He was highly indignant at the outrage committed upon the missionaries, and introduced Mr. Halligey to the Ogbonis, who were then sitting in council. They heard the story, and promised to move in the matter, and as a token of their protection gave Mr. Halligey Ogudipe's staff, a curiously-wrought piece of brass, having a red feather stuck in a hole at the top. The practical utility of this singular means of protection was illustrated next day, when the raiders appeared once more to menace the missionaries. Seeing the sign of Ogudipe they hesitated, and took counsel together; and after spending half an hour in talking loudly about what they would do, they thought better of the matter, fired a few shots in the air, and took their departure.

The following week was one of supreme anxiety. No news could be obtained of three of the captured men, but the fourth was liberated on the payment of a very heavy ransom by his friends. (At this year's (1896) Conference he was received as a minister into full connexion, and figures in our Minutes as the Rev. Amos N. Cole.)

Fearing that some communication would be made to the British authorities in Lagos, the gates of the town were closely guarded, and every traveller passing out was subjected to a searching scrutiny and enquiry. But at the Mission-house there was a trusty messenger named Yakubu, who had for many years carried the missionaries' mail-bag to and fro, and under the darkness of a starless night he cautiously stole out with letters to Mr. Roe and the British administrator. Knowing it was useless to attempt an exit by the gate he scaled the city wall, took a daring leap into the moat below, and before daybreak was clear of the town and safe from any fear of pursuit. Before leaving he said to Mr. Halligey: "I shall be back in eight days from now if alive and free. If I do not come you will know that I am either a prisoner or dead, and will send someone else."

Slowly did the days pass by, and as the last one dawned and wore on, fear came into the waiting missionaries' hearts, and they gave the faithful Yakubu up for lost—he had fallen into the hands of their enemies.

Their anxiety and alarm may easily be imagined. If Yakubu was unsuccessful in his mission almost their last hope was gone, for they were well aware that if he failed no one else could succeed. To begin

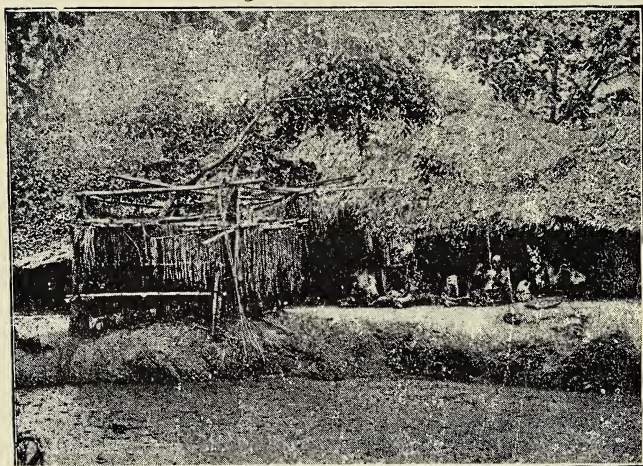
with, not every man in their service was as thoroughly reliable and devoted to their interests as he, and they were uncertain in the hour of their danger whether others could be depended on. Then again, it was not every man, however trustworthy and faithful he might be, that would be willing to risk life or liberty in such an undertaking as that in which Yakubu was engaged.

It seemed as if the cupidity and malice of Ola had led them into a trap, though their strong faith in God and in the powerful influence of Ogudipe saved the two missionaries from giving up all hope of rescue.

To their immense relief and joy, however, late in the afternoon Yakubu returned, travel-stained and worn out with anxiety and sleeplessness, his clothes torn to tatters, his body scratched and bleeding through travelling in the bush by unfrequented routes in order to escape detection ; but safe, and with a welcome letter from the Governor of Lagos, stating that an official messenger was being sent up to the chiefs to demand the release of the captives ; and that Mr. Halligey should be allowed to proceed on his journey. Mr. Roe also wrote, saying that he was interesting the Egba merchants in Lagos in the matter, and that efforts would soon be made to effect a release or a rescue.

In due time the messenger arrived, and the Jagunas were placed in a position of much perplexity. A brush with the British was not at all what they desired, and they began to wish they had never heard of the white man's treasure. A summons was issued by the authorities calling all the parties concerned in the trouble to attend a tribunal at the Shodeke's

palace. This proved to be a most important palaver, and people came in their thousands to witness it. Each party had its own orator, who was instructed in whispered conference what to say. Amid profound silence the chosen speaker of the Ogbonis stepped forth to deliver his oration, and, after various and sundry salutations, said, "We meet to-day for



OGUDIPE'S RESIDENCE.

important business. It is plain to see that the Jagunas have made a mistake, and we hope they will put matters right." Then with similar ceremonious salutations the war chiefs were represented by their advocate, who politely requested the previous speaker to explain matters a little more fully. Would he have the kindness to throw a little more light upon the subject? Thus the dialogue went on for a couple of hours, and was a curious study in diplomatic speech.



Then Mr. Halligey's turn came, and he quickly assured his audience that he was not a man of war, but a man of peace, and a servant of Him whose will was to grant peace to all. After his speech a long deliberation took place, and the verdict arrived at was, "Truly, you are a man of God."

The next turn in the proceedings was the production of the three captives, who were conducted to Mr. Halligey with their right hands stretched out for him to grasp in token of their being restored to his care, and matters seemed to be ended peacefully. But other difficulties soon arose. Again crafty schemes were devised to work mischief on the missionaries without compromising the war chiefs. An ambush was decided upon, and on the evening preceding Mr. Halligey's intended journey to the interior a number of men set out to wait and waylay him in the forest. Fortunately, however, the plot was discovered in time, and Mr. Halligey and his men left the town the same night, but in an opposite direction, and after a journey harassed by sundry alarms and constant watchfulness, succeeded in reaching Lagos safely, where Mr. Roe was found busily employed on their behalf. The whole Church had become alarmed for the safety of the intrepid Chairman and his companion, and four influential native gentlemen had already left for Abeokuta to interpose with the authorities there. With Mr. Sutcliffe, who throughout the whole affair behaved with the utmost coolness and courage, the deputation succeeded in obtaining a letter from the chief to Mr. Halligey begging him to return and fulfil his work. To show that he entertained no ill-will to them for their evil conduct, the

Chairman accordingly travelled back to the Egba metropolis, and was everywhere received with unbounded demonstrations of joy. His entrance into the city resembled a triumphant procession. A great host of Christians from all Churches went forth to meet him, bearing a most gorgeous banner, specially prepared for the occasion, on which were the words in flaming capitals—

“GOD BLESS OUR CHAIRMAN.”

As the city gates were entered the crowd burst out into melody, and sang a Yoruba translation of the hymn, “Hold the Fort, for I am coming.” The chiefs of the town also united to give him a royal welcome, and the change in the bearing and conduct of those who but a few weeks before were so bitterly hostile was most remarkable.

Interesting interviews took place, freedom to go in and out was granted, increased facilities for our work were afforded, and in a letter sent to Mr. Halligey the expression occurred: “We have done a thing we ought not to have done. May God forgive us”; the document being signed as follows:

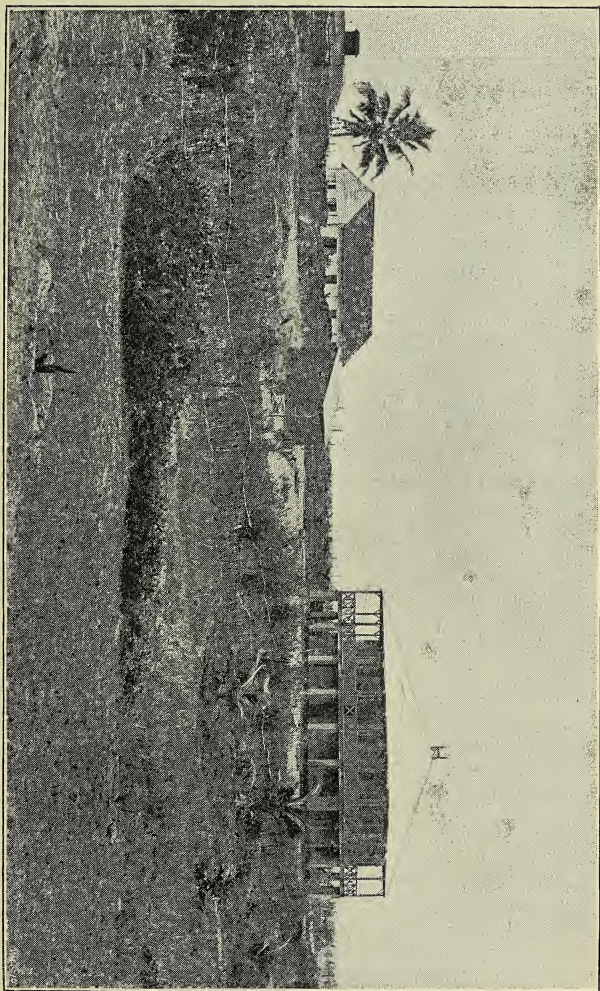
“OGUDIPE ALATONSHE, his × mark.

“KING OMLADA, his × mark.

“IGBEIN JAGUNO, his × mark.

“OGUDEYI MOGAJI, his × mark.”

Truly, God maketh even the wrath of men to praise Him, and out of evil He bringeth forth good. As in the case of the Apostle Paul, Mr. Halligey could say: “The things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel.”



LITTLE POPO WESLEYAN MISSION HOUSE AND CHURCH.

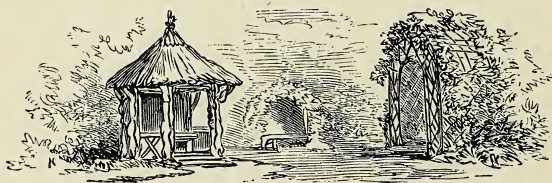


The adventure stirred up the poetic fire of a native genius, who delivered himself as follows :

The sons of Belial, on evil most intent,  
Pretended vengeance on Dahomian blood,  
And pounced with fury on the faithful few  
Of Wesley's band in Ogbe's calm retreat.  
With swords, with spears, and with clubs they came,  
To plunder or to seize, to steal, or claim.  
Some souls they hurried into loathsome dens,  
The crimson tide in others they lashed forth.  
With rudeness on the leader they laid hold,  
And held with scorn the messenger divine.  
The strife continued, and for days and nights  
Some patient souls were held in durance vile.  
The man of God, with careful, gentle brow,  
Away from home, away from native land,  
As wise as serpent, as harmless as a dove,  
Retraced his steps to Osa's\* friendly shore.

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\* The native name for Lagos.







## CHAPTER VII.

### LITTLE POPO—METHOD OF LANDING—FIGHTING DEATH.

SHORTLY after Mr. Halligey's arrival for a second time on the coast as Chairman of District, a forward movement was inaugurated at Little Popo. Unhappily, the man in charge proved himself utterly unsuitable for the work, deserted his post, and left affairs in a state of very great embarrassment. Bryan Roe, who had just returned from a much needed furlough in England, was requested to undertake the not at all attractive duty of reorganising the interrupted work and restoring the character and influence of the mission. This involved the abandonment of his long-cherished dream of engaging in pioneer work, but he cheerfully submitted to the call of duty without a murmur, and set out for his new and arduous station.

Leaving Lagos by steamer one Saturday afternoon, he found himself early next morning within sight of his future sphere of labour. The landing place at Little Popo is universally accounted to be one of the worst along the West African coast, the surf at times being so bad that for days together no

boats can put off to or from the vessels lying in the roads. Special boats have to be built for the rough usage with which the boiling surf treats all crafts that dare to venture through it, and some idea of the treatment they receive may be gathered from the fact that the average "life" of a boat is something under three years. Frequently the boats are capsized, and occasionally fatalities occur, for sharks are by no means scarce in these waters.

Mr. Roe's first landing, though not attended with any serious results, was exciting enough, as indeed every landing at Little Popo is. "Bidding good-bye to my friends on the steamer's deck, I stepped into the boat with a jaunty air, and we pushed off. Seating myself on a bale of goods I took stock of my surroundings, and found myself in the midst of a dozen naked savages of none too pleasant aspects, who sat carelessly on the sides of the boat and plunged their paddles into the water with a hissing sort of sound, which they ever and anon exchanged for a blood-curdling shout. The nearer we got to the shore the worse it seemed to become for us, and I began to entertain very serious doubts as to the safety of my goods and chattels. For myself I cared but little, and that for three reasons. First, I was a poor swimmer, and, strange as it may appear, a man, unless accustomed to such a thing, pitched suddenly in the surf, stands a far better chance of getting out alive if he cannot swim than if he can. Second, I had in my hand an enormous cork helmet, and the affectionate manner that I clung to it must have been a touching sight to the assembled natives. Above all, the headman of the boat had taken a solemn oath to bring me to the shore, having said, in a voice that was peculiarly fervent by reason

of a promise of a couple of shillings: 'Massa, I stick to you. I never leave you. I go fetch you safe to them beach, or I go die!'

"Fortified with these assurances I sat in the bottom of the boat, my legs knee-deep in a pool of water, with a serene consciousness that come what would I was well provided for.

"But now we are in the midst of the boiling surf, which dashes madly and with infuriated roar upon the beach. The boatmen cease paddling and commence praying loudly to their sea gods; the steersman stands in the stern moveless as a rock, oar in hand, his eye fixed with a cold, glassy stare on the strand in front. We are dashed hither and thither, now up, now down, and nothing but the dexterity of the dauntless steersman saves us from capsizing a score of times; and, finally, on the towering, foam-tipped crest of a huge breaker we are carried with a tremendous roar and mighty rush well up the beach. The paddlers throw away their oars and leap overboard, and are cast up by the sea on shore. I feel half inclined to follow them, not knowing but what that is the proper way to land; but a warning shout prevents me. Quite a dozen natives rush waist deep into the water, and stand by the vessel's prow, and as the keel grates upon the sand I spring into their outstretched arms, and am carried triumphantly to shore. A native schoolmaster with me was not quite so fortunate. He miscalculated his time, or else he hesitated and was accordingly lost, for another wave came, sending the boat reeling over on its side and the master sprawling to the bottom. He was very, very wet, but not much the worse, fortunately, for his mishap."

Little Popo is a German colony, and forms part of a narrow stretch of country known as Togoland. Though not more than 150 miles from Lagos the language is entirely different, though the customs are pretty much the same, and many of the Yoruba gods come up smiling, slightly disguised and under various aliases.

The Wesleyan Mission-house is, or was when I saw it, the last building in the town, and situate some distance from any other dwelling place. Mr. Roe's nearest neighbours were the sun-bleached skeletons lying in the Debtors' cemetery. This place is just at the back of the house, and dead bodies wrapped up in grass mats, and lying on little bamboo platforms, could at almost any time be seen. Many a night, Mr. Roe told me, has he sat out on his verandah in the moonlight, gazing upon the glistening white bones with a sort of fascination of horror that cannot be expressed in words. Birds of prey, pigs, and dogs, constantly hover around the unwholesome spot, gorging themselves on the human flesh and bones there displayed. Heaps of whitened bones are strewn here and there, and mingled with them are cowrie shells (to pay tolls in the land of the dead), calabashes, empty gin bottles, stools, etc., etc. These have been placed there for the use of the dead man, among whose shattered remains they lie.

"Samson," remarked Mr. Roe to his boy one day, "dead man no want cowries where he go, or else he forget to take 'em." Samson showed his teeth in a knowing smile.

"He no leave gin, though," Mr. Roe went on to say, and Samson grinned most furiously.

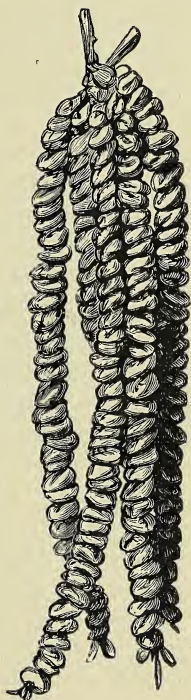
"He like gin too much, eh?" continued Mr. Roe,



and an "annual" sort of smile, from ear to ear, spread over Samson's swarthy features.

"No, sah," he replied, "them dead man no drink gin. He no fit (not able) to drink um, but him friends come, and they go drink 'um plenty quick. They think empty gin bottle plenty good enough for dead man." So that one sees there is a grain of strong common sense mingled with the heathen superstition.

It may be asked, "How came those bodies there?" To answer that question reference must be made to the custom of the Popos in reference to deceased bankrupts. Not only do the riches of a dead man descend to his next of kin, but his debts also, and were the heir to unpaid bills to venture to give his deceased relative a decent burial, he would at once proclaim his ability and willingness to liquidate the debts. Human nature appears to be peculiarly averse to paying anything that can be avoided, and hence in many parts of Africa when a man dies insolvent, his relatives, instead of burying the body, place it on a frail bamboo platform in some waste place used for the purpose outside the town walls. Then when the creditor comes round to collect what is due



COWRY MONEY.

to him, the sorrowing survivors politely refer him to the spot where the dead man is to be found.

"You want your money?" they regretfully ask. "All right; go and get it. Your debtor has not run away. He lives in the cemetery. He is out there waiting for you. Go to him and ask him for your money."

And that is all the satisfaction the poor creditor gets, and the bodies are left to rot in the sun, or be eaten by the carrion.

Mr. Roe was soon quite at home in his new surroundings, and the hearty cheerfulness and good nature so characteristic of him won for him a host of friends and adherents.

He writes in his journal about this time as follows:

"*Sunday, March 4th*, was a never-to-be-forgotten day to me. I preached my first sermon to the Popos, and we all felt the chapel to be none other than the house of God and the gate of heaven. For my own part I felt it to be an earnest of the great harvest. I believe the reaping-time is nigh at hand here. We have together determined that in this part there is to be, by God's help, a pulling down and a building up. Under almost every tree there now stand ugly, repulsive, and degrading clay idols. We want these destroyed, and throughout the Circuit, in towns, villages, hamlets, and homes, the kingdom of Christ set up. To us unaided the work is impossible, but He who is our Helper knows no impossibility, and in Him do we trust.

"On Sunday, March 11th, I saw the evidences of our onward march. At seven a.m. I met the classes, for renewal of tickets, and my heart went forth in deep thankfulness, as one by one the members spoke of firmer faith in God and clearer witness given

them of their union with Christ. Weak and feeble, no doubt, we appear in the eyes of the heathen world around us, and we know we are fighting against tremendous odds; but with the assurance the Spirit gave us in our class-meeting we felt mighty through God, and intend to win the victory for our Lord.

“Half-past ten found me again at church, where we held a memorable service. Twenty-one candidates for baptism were presented. Some of these were the children of Christian parents, and the fruit of many



SLAVES.

prayers; some were direct converts from heathenism, and represent months of hard and faithful toil. Together we prayed that God would keep them by His grace unto that time when they who have sown the seed, and those who have reaped the harvest, shall rejoice together.”

In Mr. Karl Vietor, the head of a very successful trading concern, Mr. Roe found a congenial spirit, and their hearts were knit together as one. Between them they managed to correct some glaring abuses in the colony. It had been the custom of many business

houses in Togoland to pay part of their labourers' wages in drink and tobacco—two bottles of gin and a screw of "negro head" being equivalent to a day's pay. The consequence was that many and many a man would work hard one day, and get blind drunk the next. Messrs. Roe and Vietor appealed to the government against this iniquitous practice, and an ordinance was issued putting a stop to it.

Mr. Vietor was a source of constant terror to evil-doers, and smote down unrighteousness whenever it came across his path. One day he dragged Mr. Roe down into the town, and pointed out six men chained together. They marched in single file, the fetters being fastened round their necks, and held the chain up in their hands while they walked, as though it chafed their skin.

"You see them?" cried Mr. Vietor excitedly, "you see them? Then to-morrow you are my witness at Government House, and we stop this shameful business. Those men are slaves, and it is against law and custom to hold slaves in German territory."

Next day the governor was interviewed, and soon after the slaves were set free, but so harsh had been the treatment they had received that they were utterly unable to do any hard work, and Mr. Vietor persuaded Mr. Roe to employ them on light jobs about the Mission-house, he bearing half expenses. When they had fattened themselves up somewhat he took them on at his own coffee plantation, and gave them work.

A missionary in Western Africa very soon finds out that preaching and teaching are not the only things he has to do. The more readily he can turn his hand to anything and everything the more likely



he is to succeed in his work. Bryan Roe was a veritable "handy man," a "Jack-of-all-trades," and I have myself seen him performing successfully the work of men of many professions. He took to carpentry as to the manner born, and his way of hammering, sawing, and planing would have done credit to many a journeyman of five years' standing.

When the new Mission house was built at Little Popo Mr. Halligey tells me that Bryan was most indefatigable in his efforts to help the workmen, toiling with them day by day out in the hot sun, with the thermometer registering a heat of between 90 and 96 degrees in the shade. But the penalty followed, and on the 3rd of May he was suddenly attacked by the malignant blackwater fever. The malady laid hold of him with a most tenacious grip. Paralytic sensations and frequent relapses into unconsciousness seemed to indicate a hopeless case. Fortunately Mr. Halligey was on the spot, and with almost a mother's tenderness and solicitude nursed the invalid by day and by night through three weary weeks, not having more than two consecutive hours' sleep during most of the time. The German doctor stationed at Popo was also exceedingly attentive, doing everything in his power to restore the patient, but all efforts seemed to be fruitless and Bryan Roe seemed marked for death. He grew weaker and weaker, his temperature rising higher and higher, and one night it looked as though the end was very near. Mr. Halligey and the doctor stood bending over the almost unconscious, dying man with pitiful faces.

"Poor fellow," murmured the doctor softly, "his hours are numbered. He will be dead before morning breaks."

Bryan heard the words and feebly opened his bloodshot eyes.

"No," he gasped out laboriously, "no, I shall not die, mark me. My mother's prayers will carry me safely home to England."

The doctor probably placed little faith in the prayers of a Christian woman five thousand miles away, and on leaving the sick room he gave orders for a coffin to be prepared and a grave to be dug. Early next morning as Mr. Halligey still sat watching by the sick man's side, he heard a gun fired announcing the arrival of a homeward bound vessel, and an involuntary "Thank God!" burst from his lips.

"My experience," he says in a letter to the writer, "told me that Bryan's only hope—and that a slender one—lay in being removed to some steamer and receiving the benefit of the purer sea air. This, however, the doctor, who was new to the coast, refused to sanction, but I resolved to take the responsibility of disobeying his orders, and dressing my unconscious patient, had him carried on a shutter—made out of the boards collected for his coffin—to the beach. As the vessel drew near we saw her signals enquiring for cargo, but as none was offered she began to steam away again, when I, using a signal not found in the code, ran up and down the strand, vigorously waving my umbrella, on which I had hoisted my helmet. To my joy and satisfaction the manœuvre succeeded, and the vessel hove to. Then, placing Bryan in a surf-boat, we attempted to put off, and some anxious moments followed, for the surf was particularly bad that day, but after a hard contest with the raging waves, which thrice drove us back on the beach, we conveyed him

to the steamer, only to receive the bitter reproaches of the captain, who cursed his own stupidity for waiting for such a cargo. 'I am tired,' he declared, 'of heaving your dead missionaries overboard.'

"His better instincts, however, soon returned, and leaving a faithful black servant on board to nurse Bryan, I got back to shore, and soon had my anxiety increased by the following letter from the doctor:

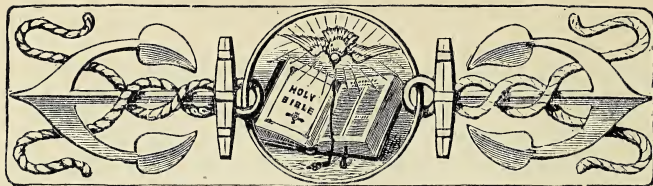
"KLEIN POPO, 25/5/88.

"DEAR SIR,

"I am surprised to hear that Mr. Roe has gone away, and am obliged, as his physician, to throw all responsibility on you."

It is easy to imagine Mr. Halligey's relief when he learnt a week later that Mr. Roe had taken a turn for the better. Placed on the steamer's deck in a dazed and almost unconscious condition, the patient remembered only hearing one of the sailors say to another: "What's the good of bringing a man as good as dead on board. We shall have to sew him up and sling him over the side again to-morrow."

When he next came back to consciousness the ship was lying off Cape Coast Castle, and the fever was gone, leaving him in a weak and most prostrate condition. A few weeks later Grand Canary was reached, and staying here for some time he quickly recovered strength, and then proceeded home to England. Medical wisdom advised him to remain for a lengthy period in order to fully build up his shattered frame, and it was eventually decided to place his name upon the President's list and send him into an English Circuit for a year or two.



## CHAPTER VIII.

### AT WORK IN ENGLAND—EAST FINCHLEY— DEPUTATION INCIDENTS.

THROUGH the summer months of 1888 Mr. Roe's mind was in a state of great perplexity. His heart yearned after Africa, but his medical advisers forbade his returning. The awful sickness he had gone through had so broken up his splendid constitution that it would be worse than madness, it would be suicide, to go back to the scene of his former exploits. "Wait a year or two," they said, "and then probably we will let you return."

His gratitude to Mr. Halligey was most profound, and in a letter before me he writes addressing him as "father," and saying: "But for you I should never have seen home and friends again. Ever since I landed I have been going over and over again those dark, dark days of suffering, when you watched by my bedside and prayed me back to life again. I can, even now, seem to hear you as you prayed one night when I felt your prayers were accepted at the throne of grace. I thank you from the bottom of my heart, and hope that some day I may be able to repay, in some measure, the care you bestowed upon me."



Acting upon Mr. Halligey's advice he determined to abandon the coast, for a time, at any rate, and early in 1889 he entered the East Finchley circuit as its first junior minister. His power of adapting himself quickly to circumstances was shown here in a remarkable degree, and he was soon as much at home in ministering to an English congregation as he had been in preaching to the negroes in Africa. From first to last his ministry at Finchley was a marked success, and so popular did he become as a preacher that on anniversary occasions the people never dreamt of sending outside for a minister to supply the pulpit, for they well knew that Bryan Roe would fill the chapel better than any stranger. "In the twenty months he was amongst us," says one who knew him well, "he crowded our church, enlarged our borders, and increased our membership. Often have I seen him, when he returned home exhausted with the Sunday duties, exulting with beaming face and gratitude over a gracious time and the marks of God's presence at the services. To many who did not know his inner life, there might, sometimes, appear in his outward manner a lightness of spirit not usually associated with ministers of the Gospel, but there was deep down in his soul one living purpose—a strong, definite, restless desire for the extension of God's kingdom. No labour was too great if that end might be attained. Whether in the problems of social life, or the broader sphere of church arrangements, God had given him gifts that were able to make him excel. Under his rule there ever arose fresh motives and aims for personal service, and it has been well said by those who sought his advice in the more private walks of life, that he was wise in counsel and prompt in

direction. There was found in him the wisdom of the sage combined with the fresh buoyancy of youth. He refused to look on the dark side of things, and in every cloud he saw a silver lining."

From the various features introduced into the working of the East Finchley Chapel, one might have imagined it to be a mission centre. The "People's Pleasant Saturday evenings" were immensely popular, and Mr. Roe strove to give the audience good value for their money. There was nothing weak and childish about the proceedings, nor were they run on the lines of a juvenile Band of Hope. The concerts were high-class, the lectures up-to-date, and as a consequence, the school-room was always crowded.

A Circuit magazine was commenced about the same time, and as editor of it Mr. Roe exhibited no little literary skill, short articles from his pen appearing in almost every number. From them one obtains some faint idea of the affection and esteem in which he was held, and of the blessed results attending his preaching. Under the heading of "Editorial Jottings" he writes in one number: "The world is full of grumblers, and everybody seems to know best what everybody else ought to do. Preachers, for instance, are always being put right, and no doubt they need to be. But a little praise is worth a lot of fault-finding, and a 'well done,' or a 'God bless you,' is worth a volume of growling. Last week one gave us good help by saying, 'Some may be glad when you go from the circuit, but there is one here that will miss you.' Another writes, 'A few weeks back, while you were preaching, God led me into the light.' Still another, 'You are young, but through God, father, mother, and children—all in this house—are

your children in Christ.' Praise God. There may be thorns in the way, but a few roses like the above make up for trifling scratches."

The trustees of the chapel and school were soon at their wits' end to know how to provide accommodation for the increased attendances. Additions to church and school were being so constantly made that in less than six months there was an increase of over one hundred scholars, and applications for sittings at the chapel were so numerous that they could not be granted for lack of room. The Rev. S. Marriott, who lived in the circuit during part of Mr. Roe's ministry, has told me that on any ordinary Sunday night seats had to be placed along the aisles, so great had the regular congregation become. Enlargements were at once commenced, but even after their completion there was scarcely room for the people who came. A scheme for building a new chapel was mooted, and would doubtless have taken definite shape had not Mr. Roe been called away again, at the Conference of 1890, for foreign service. It is said, however, that the new church, soon to be opened at East Finchley, is really the outcome of Mr. Roe's successful labours in the place.

During his stay in England, he proved himself to be a most effective platform speaker, and as a missionary deputation was everywhere listened to with great enthusiasm. I paid a visit to Melksham, Wiltshire, not many months ago, and to my astonishment found that Mr. Roe was well known in the town, having visited it first as deputation and then afterwards, by special invitation, as preacher of anniversary sermons. Last winter I received a letter from a minister in the Bristol and Bath district,

begging me to attend his missionary meeting. "We had Mr. Roe here a few years ago," he wrote, "and the impression he produced upon the people's mind was so great that they want to hear more about Western Africa."

He was placed upon the Irish deputation one year, and at Skibbereen this bill was issued :

"Postcard from a minister who has just heard the Rev. Bryan Roe :

"'Rev. Bryan Roe is A1 as a missionary deputation. He has a grand story to tell, and tells it well.'

"Mr. Roe will speak in the Skibbereen Methodist Church to-night at 8 o'clock."

In one of the Finchley magazines Mr. Roe relates some incidents connected with his deputation work, and I take the liberty of jotting them down here :

"A touching incident occurred at a country meeting. A servant-girl, whose total wages were £6 per annum, came to the service, and was so affected by the narrative of the heathen's need that she went home and brought her last silver piece—a florin—and gave it for work in Africa."

"At another place an old widow woman, who had just received her weekly dole of half-a-crown from the relieving officer, was present, and when the collection was taken up she placed the coin upon the plate. Thinking she had made a mistake, the collector handed it back, saying : 'That's not a penny, granny ; you want your spectacles on.' 'Take it, take it,' cried the old dame ; 'it is all I have, but Christ shall have it.' "



"I was greatly amused at one meeting where a much respected minister read the report, and stated that £9,000 still remained as a debt on missions, and then in glowing language urged his hearers to more systematic giving to the cause, closing by saying with much earnestness: 'Friends, let us clear off this debt to-night.' The congregation numbered 120, all working men."

"A good and worthy brother occupied the chair at one of my meetings, and in his opening remarks said: 'This meeting should last an hour and a-half, and I shall give the deputation all the time. I am no speaker, and I have no speech. I am, therefore, going to say nothing.' And it took him twenty-five minutes to say it. He then called upon another loquacious gentleman, who said it was quite unexpected; really he was not prepared, and could not possibly make a speech, a statement which he ably proved during the thirty minutes he talked. When my turn came I found I had exactly seven and a-half minutes in which to tell the sorrows and needs of the heathen, and the glorious triumphs which had been won. No wonder the meeting fell miserably flat."

Down in Lincolnshire he was assisted to a crowded congregation by the very remarkable statements made by the gentleman who manipulated the bell in the town of Haddenham. The Rev. George Hooper furnished me the particulars, and I quote from his letter: "Mr. Roe was appointed to Haddenham, as F.M. deputation, but owing to family affliction I was not sure of his coming until the morning of the day on which he was to speak. The evening was dark and wet, and after meeting Mr. Roe at the station, I went off to the town crier to send him round to

announce that the advertised service would be held. The man was most illiterate, and I instructed him verbally, though I had to put it very simply for him to comprehend it. He then went off with his bell. This is what I told him to announce: 'To-night at seven o'clock in the Wesleyan Chapel a missionary from Africa will speak, and show some heathen gods and other curiosities.' I followed him a little way down the street, and heard him at the first corner unburden himself as follows: 'To-night at seven o'clock a missionary man'—(a pause, and a voice inquired, 'Are you sure he's a man?')—'a missionary man from Afrungka' (voice, 'Where's that, Billy?') 'will show you some of God's things, and some other things besides.'

"A little further on he varied the announcement by boldly declaring that 'a commissioner's meeting was to be held,' while at a third place the people were informed that 'a missionary man would show them some of God's people, and some others.' The curiosity thus aroused was sufficient to attract a good congregation in spite of darkness and rain.

"His address was intensely interesting, and his manner that of a man whose whole soul was in his work. The people were unanimous in declaring that it was the best missionary meeting they had had for many years, and the collection was considerably 'up.'"

His wonderful versatility as a missionary speaker may be gathered from the fact that during his sojourn in England he paid a visit to his brother, the Rev. David Roe, who was then stationed at Newcastle-on-Tyne, and acted as deputation at all the missionary meetings in the Clarence Street circuit. At the close

of his first address he promised the people that if they would come to the help of the other places he would give them a different speech every time, a promise which he faithfully kept, and which he repeated on a second visit to the circuit two years later.

Just before leaving England for Africa, a valedictory service was held in the East Finchley chapel, which was crowded by friends from all parts. His final speech was a splendid effort, and few eyes were dry when he wound up with the memorable words: "I am going back to my beloved district and work. I know the climate, and I know the people. I know the difficulties, and I know the dangers, and yet I am not afraid. I am going to live and work for God there as I have done before, and if the news should come to you that Bryan Roe is dead, lay it to your heart that I died as a soldier of Christ should."





## CHAPTER IX.

### THE THIRD VOYAGE TO AFRICA—CHRISTMAS ON THE OCEAN—CONCERNING SHARKS.

IT was early in December, 1890, when Bryan Roe left England a third time for the land he loved so well. He had done great things in the name of the Lord during his brief ministry at East Finchley, and was returning to the scene of his former successes with the glad consciousness that he had not been a failure at home. He was not seeking a refuge on the mission-field because of incapacity for English work. He had held his own among his ministerial brethren even in a London circuit, and was returning to Africa because the earnest voice of duty had called him to the work there. John Wesley's rule was, "Go not to them that need you, but to them that need you most." It was Bryan Roe's rule also. He would have won for himself a prominent place in the ranks of the home ministry had his lot not been cast elsewhere. He would sometimes say to me, "I might have got on in England, but I feel that my work lies in Africa, and in Africa I hope to labour as long as God gives me strength. Let us be willing to lose everything if Africa can be won for Christ."



He spent the Christmas Day of 1890 upon the open sea, far away from home and friends—alone yet not alone, for the presence of Him who had been born so many centuries ago in the stable of an obscure country inn, was as near to him on the steamer's deck as it had been the year before in the East Finchley Chapel.

The festivities usually associated with Christmas-tide are not wholly overlooked even on such an unlikely place as a West African cargo boat, hundreds of miles away from any Christian country. The stewards—God bless them!—do their honest best to make the saloon look a little like Christmas, though the brilliant sunshine streaming in through the open port-holes, and a thermometer registering eighty-nine degrees in the shade are not particularly helpful to them, and make things appear woefully out of joint. Still, they make the most of their circumstances, and have a fantastic arrangement of flags of all nations draped around, fir trees, covered with glistening salt to represent snow, standing in corners and on tables, and the electric lamps plentifully, if not picturesquely, decorated with coloured tissue paper, while a huge sign, reading—

“A good old Christmas to you all,”

tells one that the twenty-fifth has come, and is not forgotten. And the heart of the passenger swells with gratitude to the hard-working stewards, and his hands dive down deeply into his pockets in search of a suitable coin to reward them with. And they deserve it, though the coin may happen to be a golden sovereign. They are good men and true, though they often do make singular mistakes, and

help you to salt when what you require is sugar. It seems to be a settled rule among stewards of all ranks and conditions never to give at first handing what they know a passenger needs. If they know you take tea for breakfast, they will invariably bring you coffee. Tell them you don't use milk, and they will help you to half a dozen jugfuls, and, if you are not watchful, pour some of the contents into your cup. They cannot help it. It is habit, it is second nature with them.

Their powers, too, of condensing a long sentence into a few words are unique, phenomenal. "Bring me," the passenger says, slowly and impressively, "a small piece of beef; just a little, you know, with no fat, no gravy, and not underdone. You understand now, don't you?"

"Yes, sir," they reply with an artful smile; "perfectly, sir," and going up to the window where the food is dispensed, they cry out, "Roast beef, one!" And so the passenger gets, instead of his tit-bit, a great, raw lump that would last him half a week, most of it fat, and floating about in a perfect sea of gravy. It is a wonder, indeed, if he gets beef at all. Generally it will be found to be mutton, sometimes boiled fowl. Apart from these trifles, however, the stewards on West African steamers are a most deserving set of men, and their kindness to fever-stricken passengers is proverbial.

On deck it is almost impossible for English minds to conceive that it is Christmas Day, for the sun beats down in a most pitiless fashion, and the ship seems to be sailing through a sea of silver. The little wavelets ripple along by its side in a happy, contented mood, sending up tiny torrents of silvery spray, and uttering ever and anon a joyous, murmuring laugh, as though

they understood something of the nature of Christmas, and wished to be in harmony with it. Two or three sharks, it may be, are following in the vessel's wake, attracted, it would seem, by the fact that there is a sick man lying on board, for the old and weather-beaten quartermaster confidentially informs the clerical passenger that he will soon have a burial job on hand. The quartermaster is always an authority on the subject of sharks.

"Them there sharks," he explains, "have more sense than most Christshuns. They know wot's wot, I can tell yer; doctors ain't in it with sharks. I've heard sharks larf when the doctor has told a sick man he was convalescent; larf, sir, outright, 'cos they knew what a blessed mistake he was making. They are follerin' up the scent of a man on board now that's going to die, and they'll not leave us until such times be as they gets him." Which is comforting intelligence, certainly, to the nervous passenger already alarmed by the horrible tales he has heard of the dangers of the West African climate. A cold shiver creeps down his back, and he attempts to change the conversation by stating the undeniable fact that it is a very fine day. But the quartermaster is inexorable. He is full of strange stories of coasting days in years gone by, and dearly loves to retail them to the innocents abroad. "These voyages ain't nothing now to what they used to be some thirty years ago," he says regretfully. "Why, thirty years ago we never got home from a voyage but wot half the crew had been given to the sharks. Them was the days for yer. Now, why, we hardly ever loses a man, and them there sharks is fairly starving. They ain't halt so fat as they used to be thirty years ago, and there

ain't so many of them. Why? Why, because a lot have emigrated and a lot have starved, literally starved to death, sir, they have. That's why. It's hard on the sharks these times is, I can tell yer. They'd jump at a lump of pork now, and yet I've known the day when they've turned their noses up at the engineer's steward, because he were only a boy. Held a regular palaver round the body, they did, sir, and then let it drop because there wasn't enough of it. Sense! A shark is full of sense, from his front teeth to the tip of his tail. They can tell a tough man by the size of his chin, can a shark. What? You don't believe it? But I tell you I've seen 'em. I've watched 'em, many's the time, turn a dead body over on its back and grab at its chin, and if it didn't suit let go again. A shark knows what'll agree with him better than any doctor can tell him. Don't make no mistake about sharks. They knows what's what, I can tell yer."

And with many another prodigious lie does the genial quartermaster attempt to beguile the innocent passenger.

New Year's Eve is generally a quiet affair on board to those whose tastes are quiet. The stewards do not usually put themselves to any trouble worth speaking of to remind the passengers that another milestone on the road of life is nearly passed, and the only intimation that they are likely to have that the New Year is nigh is the legend written on the mirrors in the state cabins, which wishes them all

A HAPPY NEW YEAR.

Down in the fore-castle, however, the seamen off watch hold quite a convivial gathering, and the



seductive strains of a concertina grinding out "Tom Bowling" are heard, accompanied by a deep bass voice reciting the many virtues of that estimable and deeply-lamented British tar. Every now and again a dozen other lusty throats join in to inform us of the melancholy fact that his soul has "gone alor-or-or-or-orft, his so-ole ha-has gor-or-orn aloft."

When eight bells strike a most unusual and unearthly row arises. The sound of concertinas, tin-pots, tin whistles, bells, and drums smite upon the air with harrowing effect, each one seemingly striving with the others for ascendancy. The big drums generally have it, though the tin-pots are not to be lightly despised, while the bells and concertinas run each other hard for third place.

For a moment one wonders whatever on earth is the matter. There is noise enough for the Day of Judgment. Has the ship struck on a sunken rock? Is she on fire near the powder magazine? Is she soon to be engulfed for ever beneath the blue waters of the broad Atlantic? Or have the crew suddenly taken leave of their senses? These are the first thoughts that run through the mind of the affrighted passenger as he leaps wildly out of his bunk and grasps his life belt. But before he has time to put it on and rush for the deck it dawns upon him that the New Year has come, and that this is the method the merry-making crew has adopted to celebrate the glad event. The popping of champagne corks and the clinking of glasses is then distinctly heard in many cabins, betokening the fact that some of the officers and passengers are welcoming the new era in the most convivial of fashions.

Bryan Roe's mind went back to the New Year's

morn of the previous year. How different his position was now ! He had conducted then the Watch Night service in East Finchley Chapel, and had spoken of the changes that might occur before another New Year would dawn. Of all that were then present not one, he imagined, had had their condition in life so greatly altered as himself. But there was no sadness, no regrets in his thoughts. The kindly light that had led him for nearly twenty years in the path of life had never led him astray. Amid the encircling gloom of sorrow, in the darkness of the night, and far away from home it had led him on aright thus far, and "sure it still would lead him on, o'er moor and crag, o'er rock and torrent, till the night was gone," till the morning broke and the shadows flew away. He had sung at the Finchley service the beautiful lines of Miss Waring's well-known hymn :

"Father, I know that all my life  
Is portioned out for me,  
And the changes that are sure to come  
I do not fear to see."

No ; fear had no place in his heart this New Year's morn. There was much in front of him that he knew nothing of—dangers, difficulties, hours of sickness and weariness, painful watching and distresses, heartbreaking discouragements and disappointments—but he feared them not. "Perhaps a lonely grave in this far-off land awaits me," he wrote in his journal this New Year's eve : "I know not ; I care not. If needs be I am willing to lay down my life for this work. I am as near to heaven in Africa as elsewhere, and I could not die in a better cause."

The diary for the year ends with the last two

verses of the familiar watch-night hymn, and as he wrote them I do not doubt that he seemed to hear the echo of the voices that had sung them in his presence but twelve months before.

O that each in the day  
Of His coming may say,  
"I have fought my way through,  
I have finished the work Thou didst give me to do."

O that each from his Lord  
May receive the glad word,  
"Well and faithfully done!  
Enter into My joy, and sit down on My throne.'





## CHAPTER X.

### POLITICAL TROUBLES IN LITTLE POPO.

**B**RYAN ROE'S second term of service at Little Popo began in the January of 1891. With all the ardour and enthusiasm of his first year he threw himself into the work of winning souls from heathen darkness to Christian light, and many were the trophies won.

How earnestly he yearned for the salvation of the sons of Ham may be gathered from the following stanzas taken from a poem he wrote at this time, entitled, "In Africa."

Oh, bitter cruel night  
Which shrouds this beauteous place !  
When shall thy dark give place to light,  
And woe give place to peace?  
What power can break the bond  
Which binds this hapless race?  
What arm can liberate the bound  
And smooth the furrowed face?  
To-day o'er myriad minds  
Hangs dark the heathen gloom,  
And thousands daily Satan binds,  
And hurries to the tomb.  
Tho' nineteen hundred years  
Have fled since Jesus came,  
The garb of sin this dark land wears  
Is now, as then, the same.



By wisdom or by thought  
Man never found his God.  
Nor found the name of Him who bought  
Mankind with precious blood.

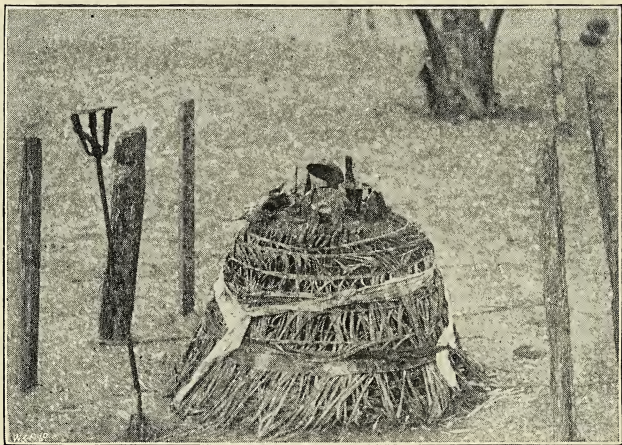
'Tis Christ alone can save,  
'Tis He alone has power  
To lift them from the deepest grave,  
And on them grace to shower.

His blood alone can take  
The stains of sin away,  
And then at last for His own sake,  
Will bless with endless day.

Following out his old custom of holding revival services, he commenced a mission soon after his arrival throughout the whole circuit, and it was attended with very gracious results. In order to allow those to come who were engaged in business until sunset, he altered the time of service, and meetings were held after dark, the condition being that each hearer brought his own lamp. Night after night, while the mission lasted, the chapels were brilliantly lighted up by several hundred native and European lamps, some hanging from the rafters, others from the walls, and some in the window recesses. The sight itself was sufficient to attract the multitude, and never a service was held without a large crowd of lampless mortals thronging round the outside of the chapel and thrusting their woolly heads through the open windows.

Reference ought to be made at this point to the painstaking toil of the Rev. J. H. Willington, who had laboured at Little Popo during Mr. Roe's absence in England. He had done much to build up the Mission on a firm foundation, and at Little Popo itself considerable progress had been made.

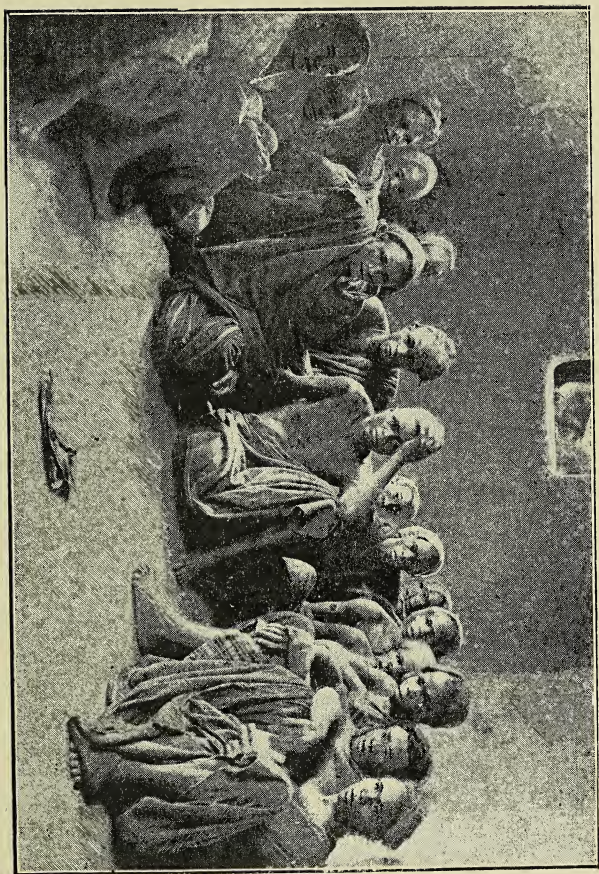
There was pointed out to me some years ago, when living in the place, the remains of what was once a huge mud idol, devoted to some god or other and my guide said : " I well remember the time when I worshipped that lump of clay. It was the most popular fetish in the place, and a few years ago would



A POWERFUL FETISH.

not have been allowed to fall into its present dilapidated condition. It has no open worshippers now, and the rains beat upon it and wash it away."

It was a striking proof to me that, through the faithful labours of Messrs. Willington and Roe, fetishism and idolatry were fast losing their hold upon the people, and that a real interest was being shown towards the Church of Christ. The following letter, written by Mr. Roe to the Rev. J. T. F. Halligey in May, 1891, affords additional proof, though it also shows that superstition and ignorance



SETTLING A "PALAVER."



do not die in a day: "Your old servant-boy, Saka, now rejoices in the name of John Thomas Frederick, having taken it out of respect to you. At his earnest desire I baptized him, with thirty-four others, last Sunday. Our church is far too small, and on many Sabbaths the people have to listen as best they can from the outside. The fetish priests are very bitter against us, and talk all sorts of foolish things about poisoning me. But this does not alarm me. I am in God's hands, not theirs. One little incident, I think, will please you. A man died recently at Englishtown, and about thirty fetish people came to Bruce's house, and for an hour or two made custom, danced, sang, and drank gin. I had an opportunity of witnessing the superstitious rites, and the sight was a saddening one. After the people had gone I walked up and down the beach, musing on what I had seen, and wondering how and when the light would break in upon the darkness. I confess I felt just a little downcast. Just then I heard a sweet, childish voice singing in Bruce's place. I listened, and a rush of tears came into my eyes, for the words the child was singing were:

"Dear dying Lamb, Thy precious blood  
Shall never lose its power,  
Till all the ransomed Church of God  
Be saved to sin no more."

I said to myself, 'That is it. "A little child shall lead them."' The singer was one of our own school-boys. Sir, who shall estimate what the truth shall do through our three hundred scholars in Little Popo? We may do but little with the aged heathen, but we can win the young for Christ."



The two great difficulties Mr. Roe found in regard to the elders were polygamy and slavery. "It is a very sorrowful fact," he writes, "that owing to polygamy we have scarcely a score of men, outside our own agents, in full membership with the Church. Now, to do the men justice, we have many who are thoroughly earnest seekers after truth, some who are convinced of the evils of polygamy, but the path of the polygamist bristles with difficulties."

Mr. Willington had established a Sunday afternoon Bible-class for polygamists, and it had been so well worked by him and Mr. Roe that when I went to Popo in 1892 I found a band of very earnest Christian men, who were debarred from membership by their plurality of wives. They were liberal supporters of the work, and took an intelligent interest in the services; they were even in receipt of a kind of bastard class-ticket, and paid class pence, but from the sacraments of the Church they were rigidly shut out. The only way in which they could become communicants was by sending away their wives, and in view of this Mr. Roe pertinently asks the following questions:

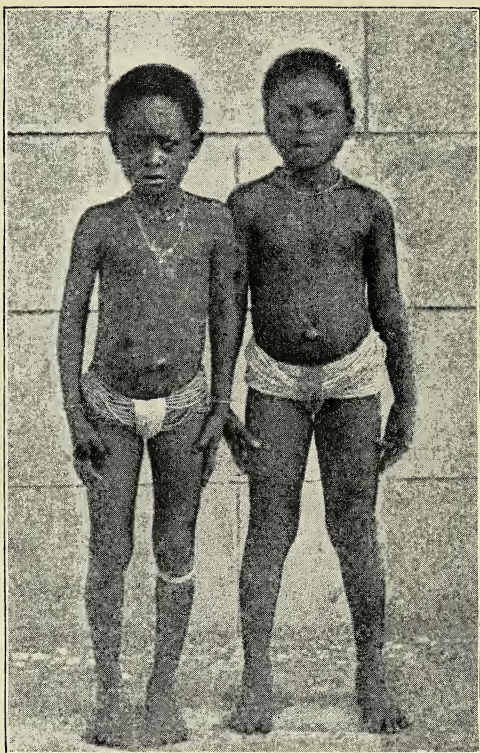
1. If *one* wife is chosen, what is to become of the rest?

2. And what of the children, to whom the father owes a great duty?

3. And what woman would dare to be the one wife chosen? Her life would not be worth much purchase.

There is told the story of a repentant chief who was advised to put away one of his two wives before he could be received into the church. Soon afterwards the chief returned, claiming the boon.

"Well," asked the missionary, "and what have you done with your other wife?"



POPO CHILDREN.

Pointing to a wide-opened mouth, the chief replied, "I have eaten her!"

That is one way out of the difficulty, with a vengeance, but I cannot conscientiously recommend it as the best.

Mr. Roe's idea was to pay great attention to the young. "Our hope here," he says, "is in the young more fully even than at home. I am also convinced that the more attention we pay to the training of the girls the sooner will the curse of polygamy cease; with them is the remedy." He accordingly made a strong point of his day schools, and despite the competition in some places of the Roman Catholics, worked them up into a very flourishing condition. His popularity among the Popo boys was unbounded, and almost every night when the duties of the day were done he was to be found out in the compound chasing the cricket-ball about with as much zeal and energy as the youngest of the scholars.

In the school English as well as the vernacular was taught, and Popo being a German colony, this did not altogether please the commandant, Count Pfeil, who insisted, soon after his arrival, on English being dropped and German taught instead. It was much easier to command than to obey, for while some of our agents spoke French, not one could speak German. Roe immediately wrote home, laying the matter before the Committee, but Count Pfeil, probably mistaking delay for disregard, commenced to harry the Mission in a manner utterly unworthy of one in his high official position, even going so far as to threaten to suppress the work entirely. It is most difficult to understand what influenced the count in his procedure, whether dislike of the English or detestation of Protestantism. Perhaps it was a little of both, and for a few months his excellency was a veritable thorn in the flesh to Bryan Roe and his people. I am quite at one with Count Pfeil in his demand that German should be taught in the schools, but

the means by which he sought to enforce the demand I most strongly deprecate. At every point he sought to check the work, and some of the principal native gentlemen in the town were placed in very disadvantageous positions owing to their sympathy and connection with the mission.

An incident occurred at this time which greatly helped to complicate matters, and which placed Mr. Roe in a situation of extreme awkwardness and some danger. One of the catechists gave way to drink and evil habits, and on Bryan remonstrating with him he became very violent, and darkly hinted that he would work him mischief in some way or other.

"Go home," advised Mr. Roe, "and get to sleep. Come again in the morning and I will talk to you."

Still muttering threats the man went, but almost immediately returned with a loaded revolver. Bryan was sitting on the verandah, and before he could rise from his chair he found himself looking into the cold muzzle of the agent's weapon. There could be no mistaking the man's intentions. Murder gleamed in his wildly-rolling, revengeful eyes, and his fingers fairly seemed to itch to pull the fatal trigger.

"You have been master many months," he hissed through his clenched teeth; "but it is my turn now. I shall count ten and then fire. One—two—three—four!" Bryan Roe's feelings at that awful moment cannot be described. His mind was in a whirl, and he was dazed with the suddenness of the whole proceedings. The man with the revolver was demented with drink and passion, and his fell purpose could be read in every lineament of his convulsively-working face.



“Five—six—seven—eight—nine——!”

One more second and the career of Bryan Roe would have ended years before it did, but Providence, in the shape of a faithful black servant, interposed. Before the fatal number could be counted the black body of Saka, Mr. Roe's boy, flung itself like an avalanche against the would-be murderer, wound its strong arms around him, and fell with him to the verandah floor. The catechist, with curses on his lips, struggled hard to free himself, but Bryan came to Saka's assistance, and the would-be assassin was secured. He was taken away to the house of Mr. Garber, and put in chains. Next morning, when drink had flown from his head, he wrote Mr. Roe, humbly asking for pardon, and begging not to be handed over to the tender mercies of the German Government. All men have their faults, and Bryan Roe was not without his. But whatever these were, malice was certainly not one of them. He was possessed of a remarkably forgiving nature, and actually pardoned his would-be murderer on condition that he went to his own country by the next steamer. While waiting for this to arrive, the affair came to the ears of Count Pfeil, who immediately sent two soldiers and had the catechist taken into custody. Knowing how strained the relations were between the count and Bryan, the catechist, to gain favour with his excellency, wove a terrible tissue of lies, and accused Mr. Roe of secretly undermining German influence, and bringing the natives to declare for a British protectorate. “He has written the British Government,” he further declared, “accusing you of shipping slaves to the Cameroons.”

The whole tale was absurd on the face of it, but the state of the count's mind towards the mission was such that he was ready to believe anything evil of its officials, and an order was at once issued for Bryan Roe's arrest. His indignant denial of the charges brought against him, however, and no proof of them being forthcoming, led to his release ; and the catechist being placed upon his trial for attempted manslaughter, was sentenced to pay three hundred marks, or, in default, to go to prison for four months, a sentence altogether inadequate for the nature of his offence.

His lies, however, bore fruit in that the count became more and more suspicious of Mr. Roe, and, indeed, of anyone, black or white, who was in any way associated with the Wesleyan mission. Many of the Government officers were Church members, and it might well be supposed that they would have trimmed their sails according to the breeze that was blowing. But to their everlasting credit be it said, they stood manfully by their colours during the threatened persecution, and were as constant in their attendance at the services as ever. The count made no secret of his intention of driving Protestant Christianity out of the town, and yet these coloured representatives of it, who were dependent upon his favour for their means of livelihood, were neither cowed nor alarmed. They held quietly on their way, in the firm belief that God was stronger than any German governor of an African colony. "Never!" said Mr. Roe, in a letter home, "never have such class and prayer meetings been held as now. The threatened storm is driving us to our shelter in Christ. The Lord of hosts is with

us ! the God of Jacob is our refuge. Earthly supports are being removed, but underneath are the everlasting arms. Whatever may happen, you will hear of us standing firm, as true soldiers of Christ, for faith and freedom. We have laid hold of the Cross, our feet are planted on the Rock of Ages, and here will we stand in life, and here will we stand in death, and no power, and no will, and no tongue shall make us move one inch; so help us, God ! Amen."

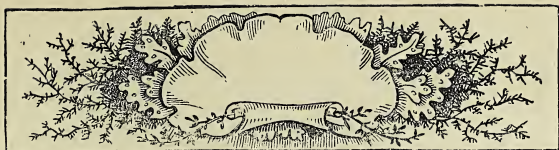
The clouds grew darker and darker overhead, and the night seemed fast closing in. The patient, plodding toil of years, toil that had been consecrated by the prayers and tears of holy men, seemed in danger of being overthrown by a single blow from a jealous man, and from many an earnest heart, and from many a godly home urgent petitions went up to the God of heaven, beseeching Him in some way to interpose and save His people. And He who heard the prayers of the infant Church in Jerusalem, and delivered His servant Peter from the relentless hand of Herod, heard the prayers of the struggling Church in far-off Togoland. Just on the eve, as it were, of the blow being struck which was to destroy the work, Count Pfeil received orders to proceed home at once to answer certain charges of misrule and misconduct that had been laid against him. A German steamer was on the point of leaving for Hamburg, and the count took passage on it. But he never reached his destination. Ere the waters of the German Ocean beat upon the vessel's prow, Count Pfeil had been summoned to give an account of his stewardship before a higher tribunal than the Court of Berlin. He was succeeded at Klein Popo by a governor more

generous in disposition, whose sympathies were entirely on the side of Protestantism, and the prospects of the Church at once brightened. Hope and confidence were restored in the Christians' hearts, and the work of the Lord again flourished.



FETISH CUSTOM FOR THE DEAD AT POPO.





## CHAPTER XI.

### A JOURNEY TO PORTO SEGURO—KING MENSAH— A MODEST MAN AND HIS BATH.

IT was not merely opposition from foes in high quarters that harassed Mr. Roe. Like many another missionary, he found trouble among friends in humble life, for his own agents now and again relapsed and returned to their former evil ways of living. Very seldom does the missionary find himself in smooth waters for any lengthened period. Life to him is no bed of roses, and when one difficulty is laid low a fresh one soon crops up. The last chapter recorded the doings of one catechist, and hardly had the events connected with it quietened down when he was called away to Porto Seguro to enquire into a palaver respecting certain alleged defalcations on the part of a native schoolmaster.

Porto Seguro is a compact little town at the southern extremity of Togoland, and though nominally under the rule of King John Mensah, is in reality German territory. The houses present the appearance of having been built in a violent hurry, and seem in places to be almost tumbling on top of one another. This is owing, in great measure, to the fact that the

original settlers were refugees driven from their homes in Popo by a Dahomian raid, and the town was built compactly in the midst of thick and prickly cactuses for defensive purposes. I sincerely pity any barefooted native that attempts to invade the place unless by way of the narrow path that leads to the gate. I got slightly out of my bearings on a visit to it once, and can recall, even now, the unpleasant sensations produced. I felt as though I were being pierced by a million pins. And I wore boots, too.

Christianity has made good progress in it within quite recent times. Fifteen years ago the whole place was deeply sunken in sensual idolatry. Fetishism flourished on every hand, and hardly a week passed by without a festival being held in honour of some native god. The people were devout devil-worshippers, and revolting were the rites indulged in. Four years ago our agent pointed out to me, near the king's palace, a huge image of his satanic majesty, which had been formerly highly revered and to which human sacrifices had often been made. When I saw it the image was in a shameful (?) state of neglect. Its head had disappeared, and rain and exposure were playing sad havoc with its body, while it was regarded, even by the heathen, with the utmost indifference and contempt.

The journey to Porto Seguro is made by water, and occupies generally from four to five hours. To some uninitiated minds a canoe journey for that length of time, under the burning rays of a tropical sun, may seem altogether a monotonous affair. But this is not necessarily so. Take Mr. Roe's journey as an example. "Picture to yourself a narrow canoe hollowed out of a tree-trunk. In the centre is a small

canvas awning, supported by bamboo sticks, and comfortably seated on a chair under the said awning is your humble servant. Sitting behind me on another chair is the local brother who is going to fulfil the important function of interpreter. Two schoolboys



LAGOON TRAVELLING.

are squatting in the bottom of the canoe, hugging their knees and exhibiting their ivory in supreme and blissful content; and sitting on its haunches at my feet is my little dog, Paddy, watching the scene with languid interest and fast-blinking eyes. At each end of

the boat stands a canoeman, dressed as near to the primitive fig-leaf fashion as is allowed. They plunge their long poles deeply into the water and send the light canoe flying along, while they sing some doleful ditty in voices that inspire you with the same revengeful feelings that a barrel-organ does at home. The song is quite original, and evidently suggested by the presence of Paddy, for the burden of it is that if a dog and a lion met in the bush, it would be a poor look-out for the dog.

"The sun is beginning to shine brightly, and its rays glint and sparkle on the water until it fairly dazzles one to look at it. Scores of sweet-voiced songsters are pouring forth their melody, as though lifting up their hearts in praise to God. Gorgeous moths and butterflies are winging their flight from place to place, the busy hum of bees floats to our ears, and the harsh, discordant croak of the bull-frog is heard from the lagoon. The banks on either side of us are covered by innumerable varieties of the tallest forest trees, from whose summits a trailing network of vines and scarlet flowers floats down and sweeps the passing current, and we are struck by the immense size, the prolific abundance, and gorgeous verdure of everything. Leaves, almost large enough for garments, lie piled and almost motionless in the lazy air. The bamboo and cane shape their slender spears and pennant-leaves as the stream ripples among their roots. Beneath the massive trunks of forest trees the country opens; and in vistas through the woods we catch fleeting glimpses of fields lying fallow in grass, or waving with rich harvests of golden Indian corn. Anon, groups of oranges, limes, plantains, and bananas are crossed by the tall stems



of cocoas, and arched by the broad and drooping coronals of royal palm. Beyond, capping the summit of a hill, maybe, we can see the huts of natives, with sheep, goats, and a few cattle browsing around.

"The forest scenery is varied. Sometimes it is a matted pile of tree, vine, and brushwood, obscuring everything, and impervious save with knife and hatchet. At others it is a Gothic temple. From the even surface of the earth the trunks of straight and massive trees rise to a prodigious height, clear from every obstruction, till their gigantic limbs, like the capitals of columns, mingle their foliage in a roof of perpetual verdure. In the early morning a dense mist lies beneath in a solid stratum, refracting the light now breaking from the east. Here and there, in this lake of vapour, the tops of hills and trees peep up, and then the golden orb lifts its disc over the mountains, and the fogs of the valley, like ghosts at cock-crow, flit from the dells they have haunted since nightfall. Presently the sun is out in his terrible splendour. Africa unveils to her master, and the blue sky and the green forest blaze and quiver with his beams."

On the day in question, Porto Seguro was reached about eleven o'clock, and having sent the polemen on with the "chop-boxes," Roe and his companions proceeded to the chapel where the palaver was to be held. Messengers were then sent to salute the king, and a bellman despatched round the town to summon the members. By half past one the chapel was well filled with people, and just as the opening hymn was being sung, two gaily-attired gentlemen arrived from the king, bringing his compliments and a huge stick

made out of polished ebony, and having a silver top, on which were engraved the words :

J.

KING MENSAH.

This was an official intimation that his majesty would be pleased to grant the missionary a personal interview. Mr. Roe, overpowered with this token of condescension, sent back the stick with many thanks, and said he would call upon the king at five o'clock, weather permitting.

The evidence at the enquiry abundantly proved the schoolmaster's guilt, but as a curious instance of the undeveloped state of the people's sense of justice, Mr. Roe says that they pleaded hard for the man to be forgiven and reinstated in office, quoting, as an argument for this, Christ's words about forgiving until seventy times seven. It took Mr. Roe some time to convince them that these words could not be applied to moral offences flagrantly committed against God's known commandments. "Why," he exclaimed, "if such were the case neither your lives nor your property would be safe from murderers and thieves. A man could steal and kill with impunity, for he could always plead when arrested that Christ said he must be forgiven until seventy times seven." The upshot of the matter was that the schoolmaster was dismissed from the mission's employment ; and after drinking a cup of tea, Bryan immediately set out for the king's quarters. He was not allowed to proceed far without some demonstration being made in his honour. A small crowd of natives gathered round him, and all the noise they could conveniently make by way of music was, of course, duly attempted. Half a dozen

tom-toms were struck with uncommon vigour and rapidity, and a few unctuous women set up a chorus that would have done credit to a band of Christy Minstrels.

Half-way to the palace this mob was met by a troop of musicians on their way home from a wedding, but, always ready for fun and mischief, they joined in the procession, and commenced chanting the most fulsome praise of King Mensah, while a buffoon insisted on leading Bryan by the arm and occasionally wiping his face with a by-no-means too-clean handkerchief. At the palace gates the crowd was so great that Bryan was obliged to pause until some amiable bailiffs modified the curiosity of their fellow-citizens by staves and whips.

A large and peculiarly hideous wooden idol stood within the compound door, and this, Bryan was told, was a fetish to drive away the devil. Inside the courtyard was a spacious idol house, crowded to excess with gods of all shapes and sizes, for King Mensah, although a wise and shrewd man, was an inveterate idol worshipper. Mr. Roe made his way up the stairs—the palace being a well-built European house—into the chief sitting-room. The furniture, mats, couches, and chairs were of cane, while wooden platters, brass pots, and common wash basins were spread out in every direction for show and service. But no king was to be seen. However, a youthful-looking slave said in fairly good English, “You sit there, sir, and I’ll go fetch him.”

“Well,” remarked Bryan to himself, “that beats all for coolness that I have ever heard. Fancy a young man of his years speaking of his sovereign lord in that fashion!”

But the young man, nevertheless, kept his word. In a few minutes he returned, saying, "I've got him. He was only outside trading gin, and I told him to let it alone and come along." Which convinced Mr. Roe more than ever that whatever else King Mensah

might be, he was certainly a man who set no store by ceremony.



KING MENSAH AND COURTIERS.

Just at that moment his majesty entered. He was a tall, well-made, handsome man, clothed in short Turkish trousers and a large Mandingo shirt profusely embroidered with red and yellow worsted. His bald or shaved head was covered by a shin-

ing black box-hat, the sign and token of his royalty, while a rather long white beard stood out in relief against his swarthy skin and hung down upon his breast. Bryan was not at all abashed by the sudden appearance of this distinguished man, though, it must be confessed, he was considerably amazed at the singular headgear he affected. Going courteously up to his majesty, he shook him cordially by the hand, and feelingly asked after the state of his health.



"How do you do, King Mensah?" he said. "I hope I find you well."

The king's face broadened with a good-humoured smile. He snapped his fingers in appreciation of the wish, and assured his visitor that he was quite well, and trusted that Mr. Roe was the same, and his father and mother, and sisters and brothers, and his cousins from the first to the fifth degree.

An enquiry as to the number of subjects he ruled over elicited the surprising information that he was forbidden by a fetish to state the number in so many words. But as the fetish had said nothing about his thinking, he thought he had about one thousand subjects.

Mr. Roe, ever alert for an opportunity of dropping a word in season, spoke in a casual way about his work as a missionary, and concluded by inviting the king and his attendants to join him in prayer. As Mensah seemed reluctant to allow him to depart, he consented to stay at the palace overnight, and tired of the dust, heat, confinement, and curiosity of an African town, he was glad to have his supper brought in preparatory to going to bed. Before retiring, however, he thought it well to refresh his jaded frame by a bath, which the king had ordered for him in a small yard outside. But I grieve to say that his modesty was put to a sore trial when he began to unrobe. Locks and latches were unknown in this free-and-easy region, and as it had been noised abroad in the palace that the white man would probably perform his ablutions before he slept, he found his tub in the yard surrounded by as many inquisitive eyes as the dinner-table of Louis the Fourteenth, when sovereigns dined in public. Not being able to discourse fluently in the

native language, he made many pantomimic signs of graceful supplication, hoping by dumb show to secure privacy. But gestures and grimaces were alike unavailing, and driven to desperation, he made bold to take off his shirt, leaving his nether garments untouched. Hitherto the lords and ladies of the court had only seen his bronzed face and hands, but when the snowy pallor of his breast and arms was unveiled many of them fled incontinently, shouting to their friends, "Come and see the white man peeling himself!"

One ancient crone, bolder than the rest, ran her hand roughly down his arm, and looking at her fingers in disgust, as if he reeked with leprosy, wiped them on the wall. As displeasure seemed to predominate over admiration, Bryan hoped that this experiment would satisfy the inquest; but, as black curiosity exceeds all others, the people continued to linger, chatter, and grin until he was obliged to disappoint their anxiety for further disclosures by going bathless to bed.

He stayed in Seguro during the next day, being most hospitably entertained by the king—who had conceived a great affection for him—and did not set out on his homeward journey until nightfall. He found the voyage back quite as interesting as the outward one had been. The night was pitch dark; but every now and again a canoe was passed having a fire burning in an iron pan on board, which lit up the darkness with a lurid glow. The occupants of these canoes were busily employed in setting lines to catch fish, and in the early morning they would revisit the scene of their toil to take off the harvest the night had brought them. Many other canoes, loaded with

goods for some distant market, were passed, their approach being heralded by noisy, boisterous songs ; and the polemen exchanged cheery shouts, and indulged in a great deal of good-humoured chaff and banter, which reminded the missionary very forcibly of the witty sarcasms of the London cabmen and omnibus drivers of his Richmond and Finchley days.

It was just on the stroke of midnight when the keel of the canoe grated on the shingle at Little Popo, and Bryan, tired and worn-out with his two days' work, thought that nothing had sounded so pleasantly in his ears since his departure.





## CHAPTER XII.

### ADVENTURES IN DAHOMEY—A GRUESOME LODGING—CAPTURED BY NATIVES.

THROUGH the loss of two agents owing to misconduct, and the secession of a third to the Roman Catholics, from whom he received the promise of better pay, Bryan found himself sadly short-handed and the scholastic work in the Circuit greatly crippled. It appeared highly probable, indeed, that one or two of the schools would have to be closed. What to do under the circumstances seemed at first a problem, but after due deliberation he determined to proceed to Lagos by a steamer just then due, and seek teachers there or at Porto Novo. Unfortunately, only one steamer per month stopped at Little Popo, and on this occasion, arriving in the night, she sailed on, not thinking it worth while to waste twelve hours in order to land a few bales and boxes. Knowing that another month must elapse before he could get away, and perceiving how very desperate affairs were becoming, he impulsively resolved to make the journey to Porto Novo by canoe. It was not the wisest course to adopt, for at that time the Dahomians were preparing for their great and final struggle with the



French, and as the French Government had placed a blockade upon Dahomian seaports and lagoons, he was obliged first of all to obtain permission to travel from Commandant Ballot, at Grand Popo. This gentleman strongly advised him to wait for the next steamer, but as Mr. Roe persisted in going he shrugged his shoulders, and gave him the passport, remarking: "If you get your head knocked off at Abomay by the beautiful Amazons, don't blame me."

Having procured a commodious canoe and eight daring boatmen, he set out on his adventurous journey one morning at daybreak, and at nightfall anchored off a small native village built on the banks of the lagoon. Lodgings were secured in the house of an amiable old gentleman, who, Mr. Roe confessed, was the most villainous-looking native he had ever had the misfortune to meet. He had lost one eye in battle, and part of the top of his head. His mouth was horribly distorted, and from the left side of it a thin stream of water seemed to be constantly trickling. He habitually wore upon his face an unearthly and fearful leer that was positively alarming, and of this he gave Bryan the full benefit. The house was but a small one, possessing three rooms, and on entering the one in which his servant had laid dinner, the first thing that struck his attention was an artistic arrangement of seven skulls fastened to the wall by means of nails driven through their eye-sockets. Seeing Mr. Roe gazing with some considerable interest at this charming collection of human remains, the old man of the house shuffled up to him with a hideous smile, and proudly affirmed in broken English: "Master, *I* kill all them!" Bryan expressed unlimited admiration at his prowess, and at the same

time felt under his coat to ascertain if his revolver was safe and in working order. Satisfied that it was, he sat down to dinner with a good conscience, but found that it was not the pleasantest thing in the world to eat in the presence of the ghastly, grinning relics of mortality facing him, and he may be excused for not making much of a meal.

On going into his bedroom another delightful surprise awaited him. Grouped gracefully along the wall at the foot of his bed were eleven other skulls; and again the old landlord crept up to him, slavering and leering frightfully. "Master," he remarked gently, "I kill all them too."

Bryan felt as though he were standing in a cemetery, and not knowing but what the septuagenarian man-slayer possessed an ambition to add his skull to the already large collection, he took particular care to place his revolver under his pillow when he went to bed. Sleep was out of the question. A sort of horrible fascination drew him to a closer inspection of the skulls glistening in the moonlight, and he lay for some time with his eyes fixed intently upon them. Suddenly the light failed, and a heavy tornado swept over the village. It did not last long, and when the last echoes had died away in the distance Bryan proceeded with his inspection of the headpieces on the wall. All at once a great noise outside his bedroom door drew his attention away from this pleasant occupation. His worst fears were realised; the old man was coming for his skull. "Bryan," he murmured to himself, "I'm afraid you are as good as a dead man."

He was not at all anxious, however, to die like John the Baptist, and resolved to use all his powers to

persuade the landlord to leave his head in its present position. And as he judged that a loaded revolver might prove a powerful argument in his favour, he placed his finger on the trigger and sprang out of bed. The door was ruthlessly banged open, and a crowd of jabbering natives rushed in, bearing in their midst the body of a man, dripping wet. The genial old host led the way with a smile of great content upon his open countenance, and in the twinkling of an eye he was in a straight line with death.

"What is the meaning of this?" demanded Bryan fiercely. "Speak out, or I shoot one time."

The old man's face changed from smiling content to supreme terror. He threw up his hands and shouted, "Master, master, don't shoot, don't shoot!" while the men behind, loosing their hold upon the body, let it drop with a dull, lifeless thud upon the floor.

"Why do you come here? What are you bringing here?" cried Bryan excitedly, as he waved his weapon frantically in the air. "No palaver, now. Tell me, or I shoot every man Jack of you?"

If he had shot at that moment the bullet, in all probability, would have gone through the roof. But the wicked-looking landlord was too paralysed with fright to notice that.

"Oh, master," he exclaimed woefully, "the man we bring here is dead. He try to cross lagoon. Tornado catch him, and he drown. We leave him for this room to be company for you."

Finding that they had no dark and sinister intentions in view, and that his skull was not the object of their nocturnal visit, Bryan calmed down considerably, and watched them with a certain

amount of interest as they laid out the dead, dripping body upon a bench by the side of his bed. This ceremony being brought to a satisfactory conclusion, the whole party respectfully bade him good-night, and peacefully retired, leaving him alone with the dead man, whose eyes, wide open, were fixed with a glassy stare upon the roof, and the eleven skulls for company.

Bryan did not feel quite sure that he appreciated such enlivening company, and putting on his hat, went outside to meditate upon the matter. It took him a long time to make up his mind, for when breakfast was announced he was still walking about in the compound.

At six o'clock he bade good-bye to the gruesome hovel, and got away again on his journey, the old man deputing his tom-tom players to accompany him to the lagoon, and thus literally drumming him out of the place, though, it should be mentioned, this is accounted a high honour in a heathen town.

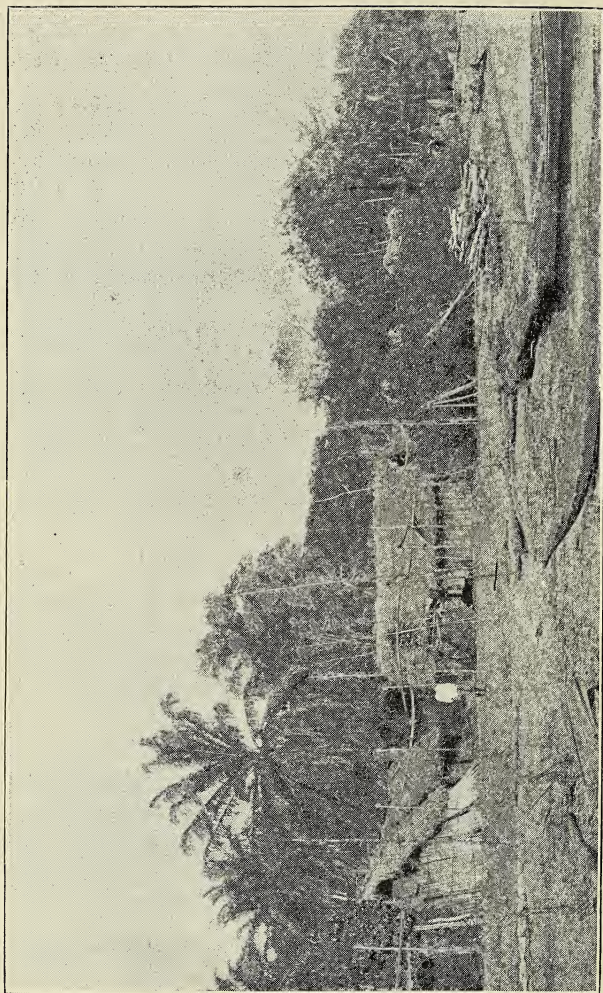
The canoe was paddled along for a few hours, and then a halt was made to allow the boatman to cook "chop." Bryan, in the hope of adding to his larder, took his gun and boy, and went out for a stroll in the bush. They had not gone far when they found themselves suddenly surrounded by a score or two of formidable natives, who seized and bore them off to a small town, under the pretence that they were French spies. Fortunately the boy was well versed in the language of the country, and, instructed by Mr. Roe, he used all his powers of eloquence to persuade the captors that his master was a peaceful missionary on his way to Lagos. But to no purpose, and an adjournment was made to the "palaver shed," where a great enquiry was held.



The boy again explained Bryan's name, nationality, occupation, and destination, and added that he had come to the town merely to present his compliments to the chief and give him a "dash" (*i.e.*, gift). The chief, the boy sagaciously observed, was well known to his master as a renowned warrior. His mighty deeds in war had reached the ears of men in Little Popo, and it was impossible to pass by his place without paying him a visit and making him a present. The boy was evidently a born diplomat, and his flattering words tickled the chief's ears amazingly. He proudly stroked that portion of his person which a waistcoat ought to have covered, but didn't, and patted the truthful speaker approvingly on the back. On the whole the natives were inclined to believe the story told them by the boy, and to allow Bryan to depart, but one man, who had appeared upon the scene in a somewhat Mephistophelean fashion by suddenly jumping over the "palaver house" wall, seemed bent on sending the captives to King Benhanzin at Abomey. He was a great orator was this man, and delivered his words with many frantic gestures. The servant boy regarded him with a malevolent eye and put him down as a personal enemy, upon whom it was his bounden duty to wreak a terrible vengeance. He settled in his mind that if the palaver ended in a fight, Mephistopheles should be the first to die. He should have the benefit of the first shot, and he borrowed Mr. Roe's revolver with that benevolent intention in view. "Master," he whispered, while his enemy was haranguing the mob, "let me have that pistol."

"What to do?" asked Bryan.

"I go kill that man, by-and-by," was the reply.



FISHING VILLAGE.

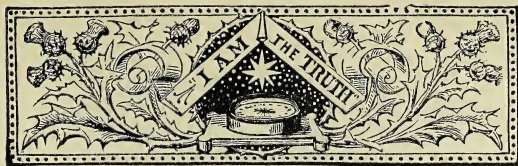
"I no rest peaceful in my grave if he live after me. He be rascal too much."

All through the afternoon the palaver continued, and how much longer it might have gone on it is impossible to say, for the music of speech is what the average African loves to hear. But the chief was somewhat disposed to be friendly with Bryan, owing to the boy's judicious flattery and the promise of a present, and he determined to bring matters to a crisis by demanding the production of the gift. Bryan sent his boy down to the boat for a splendid piece of red velvet, which so pleased the eye and captivated the heart of the warrior chief that he capered about the compound for very joy. All his doubts were set at rest. Bryan was no French spy. A French spy never had such a piece of cloth as that in his possession. It was an undeniable proof of all that the boy had said, and Bryan was his friend for life. But when a cheap white helmet, which the boy was wearing, was added to the cloth, the chief's delight knew no bounds. He was quite beside himself with emotion, and gave vent to many extravagant expressions. Bryan was now not only his friend, but his brother, his son, his father, his uncle—in fact, the whole of his family relations, male and female, near and remote, rolled into one, which, considering the item that they would number close upon a hundred, was a pretty large order, and imposed a heavy weight of responsibility upon such a young bachelor as Bryan then was. But he accepted it cheerfully, and made his way down to the boat, thankful that he had got out of a dangerous difficulty so cheaply. The boy lingered behind, toying affectionately with the butt end of the revolver hidden away in the folds of

his cloth, and confessed afterwards to the unchristian feeling of regret that no opportunity had occurred to him of bestowing some parting token of regard upon Mr. Mephistopheles. No further mishap took place, though extreme caution had to be observed, and Bryan reached his destination in safety. He succeeded in securing the services of the agents he required, but returned to his station by steamer, not feeling anxious to renew the many pleasant acquaintances he had formed on his outward trip.







## CHAPTER XIII.

WRECKED ON THE KROO COAST—FAITHLESS  
THOMAS—HARD TIMES.

IT may not be out of place at this juncture to point out that another member of the Roe family has suffered for the sake of foreign missions on the West Coast of Africa, and in a narrative of missionary perils and adventures it will not be taking too much of a liberty to insert here the story of Harvey Roe's shipwreck. It will be remembered by the reader how Harvey found salvation in his father's barn on the morning after the memorable love-feast at Bishop's Offley, and how his name appeared with his brother Bryan's on the Stafford Primitive Methodist plan. Filled with the same earnest desire as his brothers for the salvation of his fellow-men, he, too, became a preacher of the Gospel, and took his place in the ministry of the Primitive Methodist Church. The Rev. David Roe was anxious for him to enter the ministerial ranks of the Wesleyan connexion, but Harvey remained steadfast in his attachment to the Church in which he had received so much spiritual good. "I was born among the Primitives," he said, "and among them I intend to live, work, and die."

Just a few miles north of the equator there is situated the island of Fernando Po, a Spanish possession, and here for many years the Primitive Methodists have carried on a most successful mission in the face of great difficulties and much opposition, being harassed and hampered time after time by the actions of a Government anti-Protestant in its tendencies.

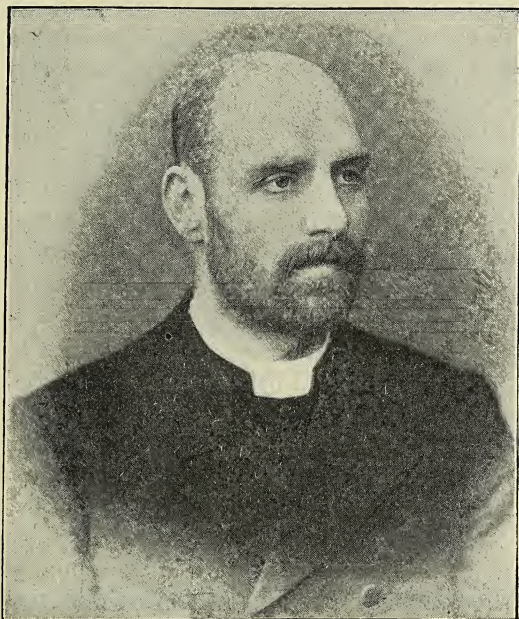
In July, 1885, the Rev. Harvey and Mrs. Roe sailed, per ss. *Corisco*, for this distant spot, full of faith and hope for the future, to be followed a few months later by Bryan Roe, *en route* for Lagos. It appeared to be the will of God, however, that only one of the brothers should be allowed to labour in the land of death, and that the other two should work for Him at home.

The *Corisco* was favoured with a singularly fine passage for some time, and arrived at Sierra Leone two days before she was due. Early one morning, however, as she was steaming along between Sierra Leone and Cape Palmas, the passengers were suddenly startled by an unusual noise and jerk, as though something had struck the propeller. A moment later there was a crash that sounded like the booming of a cannon, and the ship appeared to be slowly sinking. Springing out of their berths, the affrighted passengers rushed pell-mell on deck to ascertain what was the matter, and heard the captain order the boats to be lowered, while a steward was sent below with the message, "All hands on deck at once; ladies to go to the poop!"

On deck it was as dark as the Egyptian plague, and the rain was coming down, as it only can on the west coast of Africa, in blinding sheets and torrents. Fortunately the captain and his officers were perfectly

calm and collected, and acted as coolly as if engaging in a pleasure party.

"Lower away the boats on the lee-side," was the order given, "and ladies stand by to go first, and their husbands prepare to follow."



REV. HARVEY ROE

A great rush was made at once for that side of the ship, most of the hands evidently imagining that they were either wives or husbands, and a passenger in his frenzied excitement cut away the ropes by which one boat was suspended, and the boat falling stern first into the sea, was lost. Fearing that the men were in danger of losing their heads, the captain produced a

ponderous-looking revolver, and expressed his determination of shooting the first man that did anything without orders.

It was now found impossible to launch the boats on the lee-side of the ship, and a move was made to the opposite side. "The Lord in His mercy help us!" muttered one of the sailors hoarsely. "See, the ship is slipping off the rock, and she will go down head first!"

Even as he spoke the vessel left the sunken rock on which she had struck, and a great cry of terror went up to heaven, for everyone imagined that all was over. Men who had never prayed before fell on their knees and prayed in the horror of that awful moment, while others stood speechless in a state of stony despair. But the steamer, with a gallant effort, righted herself and began to settle down gradually. The boats were thereupon lowered with all haste, and the ladies hoisted into them. So hurried were the proceedings, every second being of value, that as Mrs. Roe was descending, a sudden lurch on the vessel's part dashed her hand against its side, smashed her wedding-ring in pieces, and stripped the skin off her fingers from nail to knuckle. When the captain, who was the last to leave the ship, stepped into the boat and gave orders to push off, the water was up to the steamer's bulwarks, and ere the boats had been pulled many strokes away, she sank to the bottom.

Not being quite clear as to his whereabouts, the captain ordered the boats to lie easy until daylight dawned, and when the first faint streaks from the brightening east came, they revealed the welcome fact that the shore was not very far away. What was better still, a small white house was espied in the



distance, and the captain cordially remarked, "Come now, we are not so badly off after all. That looks a bit like civilisation, at any rate."

As the day advanced hundreds of natives came off in canoes, whooping and shouting frantically. One man paddled up in a small skiff, and said in "pidgin" English :

"White men live for-shore ; you come, and me take you to them."

The man's appearance was not altogether above suspicion, and despite the assuring fact that he rejoiced in the somewhat suggestive name of Tom Twoglass, the captain was not inclined to trust him too far just then.

"Where are we ?" he enquired.

But all the information he could gather from the man was that they were somewhere on the Kroo coast, and in the vicinity of the river Cestos.

The captain grew even more suspicious on hearing this, and regarded Mr. Tom Twoglass with no favourable eye.

"I dare not trust this man," he said to his officers. "And unless it is true that Europeans occupy yonder house, it would be folly to land. Only a year or two back a German vessel was lost somewhere about here, and the treatment they received was not such as we should like to undergo."

Breaking off a piece of the boat, he wrote on it : "*Corisco* wrecked. Are there any white men on shore ? Is it safe to land ? Ladies with us. Write back."

"There," he said to Thomas, handing him the board, "take that to them white men ; and when you bring letter back, I go dash you plenty shillings."

In less than an hour the man returned with a

written message, saying that Dutchmen lived on shore from the firm of Hendrick, Miller & Co., Rotterdam, that it was quite safe to land, and that Tom Twoglass might be entrusted as pilot for the bar. As events happened, however, the trusty Thomas turned out to be a sad hypocrite, and something of a cunning rogue into the bargain ; for, instead of steering the shipwrecked people to the usual landing-place over the bar, he took them to a lonely spot on the open beach, fully a mile from the Dutch factory, where it was most difficult to land owing to the heavy breakers, which dashed the boats roughly on shore and smashed two of them to pieces. The natives, with anything but pleasant looks, and even less pleasant manners, surrounded the helpless crew and passengers and robbed them of everything they possessed in the way of food and clothing, leaving behind only half a bushel of hard ship-biscuits, which somehow escaped their vigilant notice. Tom Twoglass, it was noticed, was particularly busy in helping himself to various articles which belonged to his betters ; and when a small keg of brandy was broached to celebrate the sudden accession to so much property, he partook of it in a greater quantity than his name would seem to imply. Two-bottles would have been a more correct name to be known by, that being nearer the mark as an estimate of his drinking capacity.

The ladies were now in a most pitiable condition, and had to be carried to the Dutch factory, which was a remarkably small building for so large a party, possessing only two rooms—one used as the store, and the other for living in. The celebrated old lady who resided in a shoe was not more troubled to find sleeping accommodation for her numerous family than

were the two Dutchmen to provide apartments for their unexpected guests. In a little odd nook, which one of the Dutchmen occupied as a bedroom, the ladies were installed, but the rest of the party had practically to shift for themselves. Fortunately there was a stock of coloured shirts in the factory, and these were placed at the passengers' disposal; while the sailors contented themselves with native cloths, and thus they were attired until their own garments dried, which was not until three days later, as it scarcely ceased raining an hour during that period.

The food question soon became a most serious matter, for the Dutchmen were entirely out of rice, and had but few provisions in their factory. Half a biscuit each, washed down with a little native gin, was all the food the crew and passengers had for their first meal, and many were the anathemas levelled at the head of the faithless Tom Twoglass as they remembered the many toothsome articles of diet he had deprived them of. Later in the day a bullock, about the size of an English calf, was obtained from a native chief for the modest remuneration of £5, and from it a huge potful of steaming broth was made. A couple of planks placed on barrels served for a table, and, crockery being scarce, four or five cups had to do duty for the whole party. Plates were not called into requisition, neither were knives and forks, and as far as comfort went the meal was not a great success. The meat was picked up in the hand and eaten with another half of a ship biscuit, while the cups of boiling broth were passed on from one to another. But, in spite of all these drawbacks and lack of etiquette, this standing-up meal was thoroughly enjoyed by the well-nigh famished men.

The diet was different next day, a goat and dried fish, with a little rice obtained from a native up the river, forming the menu. A boat was then despatched to Grand Bassa, fifty miles away, to procure provisions and obtain the assistance of any outward or homeward bound vessel. It returned after an absence of four days, bringing a little flour and some coffee. Palm-oil cakes were made of the flour, but they were not relished as bread would have been ; and as neither milk nor sugar was forthcoming, the coffee was by no means the most palatable of drinks. It was the day of small mercies, however, and the shipwrecked men ate, drank, and were thankful, though the rueful expression on many faces seemed to indicate a condition of mind the reverse of that.

The passengers and officers at night time occupied plank beds on the bare floor of the factory, utilising mail bags for pillows, and native cloths for covering purposes. The crew were not so well off as that even, and the open sheds in the compound formed their sleeping apartments. The ladies were in the worst plight of all, prostrate with fever, and unable to eat the hard biscuits, which soon became almost the only food obtainable. A little quinine had been saved from the wreck by the thoughtfulness of Major Vetch, one of the passengers, and to this the ladies undoubtedly owed their lives. The tiny room in which they slept would only hold a single bed, with just enough space alongside for one to walk. The first night spent there must have been an awful one to them. Cases of gin had been washed ashore from the wreck, and duly annexed by Tom Twoglass and his faithful gang, who promptly sampled them, and finding the contents entirely to their liking



forthwith held a high carnival outside the factory walls. I am not in a position to state the exact quantity imbibed by the liquor-loving Thomas on this occasion, but, judging from what followed, I am inclined to the opinion that Twobarrels would have been an appropriate name for him to have answered to. He may have indulged to a greater extent than the title suggests, but I prefer to err on the side of leniency. All night long the air was filled with horrible noises, the drunken blacks yelling, cursing, quarrelling, fighting, and firing guns, as if demented. It is a wonder that the poor women lived through it all, and when the doctor saw them next morning he gave their case up as hopeless; but God, in His mercy, brought them slowly back to health, lest their friends should have sorrow upon sorrow.

For nine anxious days, and nine long, weary nights, the shipwrecked crew and passengers continued in their uncomfortable condition. Rats, the size of cats, ran over them at night-time and bit their feet, while ants, cockroaches, beetles, lizards, centipedes, and other loathsome creeping things rendered the situation almost unendurable. A large army of driver ants threatened on one occasion to invade the factory, and compel the refugees to seek shelter elsewhere. Jiggers were strongly in evidence, and as the passengers had neither boots nor stockings, thanks to the thoroughgoing disposition of Thomas Twoglass, *alias* Twobottles, *alias* Twobarrels, their feet soon presented a very blistered appearance from the attacks of these troublesome little worms.

On the tenth morning the welcome sound of a cannon was heard, announcing the arrival of a steamer, and it was answered by a loud shout of joy and

thanksgiving from the shipwrecked men. The women fairly wept with gratitude at the thought that their sufferings were almost at an end, and the men capered about and shook hands with each other like beings possessed. It did not take long to gather their belongings together. There was no packing to be done. What few things they had brought ashore the amiable Thomas and his gallant followers had thoughtfully taken charge of to avoid unnecessary trouble when the time of rescue came, and up to now they had evinced no special desire to return them. So, in spite of the pouring rain and the rolling surf, the boats were launched, and after a tedious journey of five miles through a choppy sea, the long-suffering crew and passengers of the *Corisco* gained the deck of the *Benguela*, thankful, indeed, that their trials were over, and that their lives had been mercifully preserved. Through perils of waters and through perils of the heathen they had been safely brought by the tender mercy of God. They had lost all their possessions, but had escaped with their lives, and many of the party that morning, in the privacy of their cabins, lifted up their hearts in devout thankfulness to the eternal Father, who had shielded them in danger's hour, and protected them from rock and tempest, fire and foe.

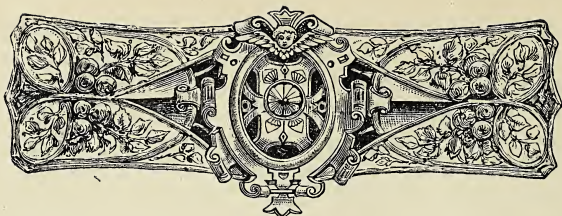
Some of the crew confessed that there was but one cloud upon the vista of their happiness, and it consisted of the fact that they had not been afforded a ten minutes' interview with their friend, Thomas Twoglass, before departing. Their cup would have been full could they have repaid him for his very kindly offices. But Tom was a modest man, as his name implies, though he occasionally went beyond his name when drinking at another's expense, and he

discreetly kept himself in the background that morning, feeling assured that the sailors' thanks would be more than he could bear.

Mr. Harvey Roe did not suffer much in health from the effects of the strange adventure, but his wife was greatly prostrated. For many weeks she was as perfectly helpless as a newly-born child, and during the whole of the voyage home her husband was obliged to dress, wash, and even feed her. Her life was despaired of by the doctor on board, and when Liverpool was reached it was thought she had come home only to die. "God, however," says Mr. Roe, "was better to us than all our fears, and mercifully spared her to me, though to this day she still suffers from the effects of those dreadful nine days and nights spent in that Dutch factory on the west coast of Africa."

The doctors were unanimous in their decision that she should not return to the coast, and Mr. Harvey Roe settled down to English work with all the old zeal of his earlier ministry. While stationed in the Black Country he became chairman of the School Board in the town of his residence, and held the position until his removal to Watford, where he is labouring to-day.

To the two Dutchmen who sheltered the hapless crew and passengers of the *Corisco* in their time of distress, Mr. Roe pays a high tribute of respect. One of them died soon after their unlooked-for guests had departed, and his end, no doubt, was hastened by the trouble, anxiety, and discomfort he was put to in caring for the lives of others. The firm of Hendrick, Miller & Co. may not be well-known in England, but there are a few hearts, at any rate, that entertain for it and its employees feelings of the very liveliest gratitude.



## CHAPTER XIV.

### BEGINNING WORK IN IJEBU.

UP to quite within recent years the work of the Wesleyan Foreign Missionary Society was confined almost exclusively to the coast, Abeokuta being the principal inland Circuit. The Rev. J. Milum and his colleagues toiled and planned for years with the most devoted energy to establish stations in the interior, but, chiefly on account of tribal wars, their desire remained unsatisfied. In 1885, however, the Rev. J. T. F. Halligey succeeded to the charge of the Lagos district, and finding the state of the country much more settled, he determined to make the attempt to extend our work into the great Yoruba-speaking region beyond. He was successful in establishing stations at Ibadan, Oyo, Iseyin, Ogbo-moso, and Eruwa, and the work in most of those places has been graciously owned of God.

Mr. Halligey's idea in starting these missions was a most sagacious one, though it has not yet been completely carried out. It was to form a regular chain of stations reaching from the coast to the far interior, each being within a fairly easy distance of the next. The stations he established in the Yoruba



country are connected on the one side with Abeokuta, and on the other they aim at reaching the Niger by the inland route, Ogbomoso being only two days' journey from the great Mohammedan city of Ilorin.

Between Lagos and Ibadan, however, there is a large tract of country occupied by a Yoruba-speaking tribe called Ijebus, and in this Mr. Halligey found it



CHRISTIANS AT ISEYIN, YORUBA.

impossible to establish missions owing to the hostility of the Awujale, or king. The people were warlike in their tendencies, and apparently had a strong aversion to any sort of manual labour. Occupying a middle position between the coast and the interior, they took upon themselves the task of collecting tolls upon all articles of commerce passing to and fro; and when this pleasant duty did not bring them in a sufficiently large income, they added to their resources by the lucrative pastime of entrapping carriers and sending

them into slavery. In 1891 things had come to such a pretty pass that a remonstrance was made, and so highly incensed were the Jebus at this that they closed all their roads and allowed goods to pass neither up nor down. Trade in Lagos was consequently crippled to an enormous extent, and, stirred up by the traders, the Government at length proceeded to take the matter into its own hands. An ultimatum was sent up in December, stating that if the roads were not freely opened within a month, they would be forcibly opened at the point of British bayonets. To gain time to prepare for this emergency, the cunning Ijebus sent down a deputation to Lagos to state their side of the question, and on January 18th, 1892, a grand full-dress "palaver" was held at Government House.

With a view of impressing the Jebu delegates with the strength at our command, some 200 Hausa soldiers were paraded in the street, armed with guns and swords; and every now and then small cannons were discharged, while the innocent-looking Maxim guns were prominently displayed. Under a large, spreading tree in the Government House compound a low platform had been erected. This was covered with a flaming red cloth, and sumptuously furnished with chairs and tables, the former being occupied by the Governor, Sir Gilbert Carter, officials, and members of the Legislative Council. The wall of an outbuilding ran up at the end of the platform, and was plentifully draped with Union Jacks and bunting. The yard was covered with native mats, and in the front, near the platform, sat the representatives of the Jebu king, distinguished from the rest of the company by their gorgeous apparel and clean-shaven crowns.

Behind them squatted a crowd of Mohammedans, and seated on chairs and benches on the outskirts were the European traders and natives of the better class.

The Governor commenced the palaver by demanding an immediate reopening of the roads, and urged upon the chiefs the desirability of allowing missionaries to labour amongst them, they having up to then resolutely refused this. He paid a passing tribute to missionary effort by commenting on the contrast between Lagos and Ijebu. "Lagos is great," he said, "and you are small. Why? Because you are so narrow. You shut everybody out of your country, and refuse to be taught the truth of God." The palaver ended somewhat confusedly, the natives signing an agreement, which, I believe, they did not rightly understand and had received orders not to sign at any price; for when they returned home and told what they had done, they were one and all put to death by the king. Such, at least, was the report current in Lagos.

A few weeks passed by, and still the roads remained closed. The Government, wishful for a peaceful settlement of the affair, sent up Major Stanley to Ijebu, and a Mr. Pratt to Abeokuta, which had now followed the example of its neighbour, to know what their intentions were. Neither of them received a kind reception, both men having their lives threatened. Major Stanley was treated with the utmost insolence; his message was contemptuously torn up unread, and he was given a limited number of hours in which to get out of the country.

Mr. Pratt received much rougher usage at the

hands of the Egbas, who cut short his remonstrances by turning his horse's head homeward, and driving him out of the town. His orderly did not get off quite so cheaply, being compelled to disrobe and dance a sort of minuet amid the jeers and gibes of the grinning multitude.

It was felt that the time for decisive action had come. Trade was practically at a standstill, and provisions in Lagos were being sold at almost famine prices. There were a few who still advocated a policy of peace, notably Prince Ademuyiwa Haastrup, who wrote a very able pamphlet on the question ; but it was generally admitted that the time for peaceful measures had passed, and in April an expedition marched up into Ijebu. It did not take long to settle matters then, and after a couple of brief battles, in which the Jebus fought with conspicuous courage, Jebu Ode, the capital of the country, was taken, and the Awujale made prisoner.

The news of the conquest was received in Lagos with every token of exuberant joy, for the Jebus had never been prime favourites with the multitude. Among Christian people, however, the news came as a call from God to another warfare in the country, the weapons of which were not to be carnal, but spiritual. Another conquest was to be made, and the defeated Jebus won for the Lord Jesus Christ.

The Rev. J. D. Sutcliffe was then in Lagos, and after some consultations with Prince Ademuyiwa, resolved to go up and occupy Ijebu Remo in the name of the Lord. Without any permission from the missionary secretaries, and relying entirely upon the promises and providence of God for carrying on the work they intended to commence, a





PRINCE ADEMUYIWA.

small band of missionaries left Lagos on July 9th, 1892, and landed the same evening at Ikorodu. Next morning the first Christian service was held, and the Rev. J. H. Samuel preached from the appropriate text, "This day is salvation come to this house," Luke xix. 9. Mr. Sutcliffe also spoke, and the chiefs of the town agreed in council to receive a catechist and be instructed in the Word of God.

Shagamu was the next place visited, and the entrance into it almost resembled a royal procession. A short distance from the gate a halt was made, according to the country custom, and a notice sent to the Akarigbo (king) of the missionaries' approach. Before half-an-hour had elapsed the deep boom of the war-drum gave token that the message had been received with welcome, and preparations were made for an advance. When the party got within fifty yards of the walls, a band of shouting braves marched forth and bore the missionaries through the gates in triumph, singing native songs, accompanied by all sorts of music and hubbub. They made at once for the king's palace, and entered an immense quadrangle, which was known as the palaver-compound. Its vast area was densely packed by a fragrant crowd of old and young, some armed with guns, others with spears, while all wore knives or cutlasses, slung by a belt hung round their necks. Shortly afterwards the king marched in, preceded by a numerous band of shrieking and tom-tom thumping minstrels, and his entrance was duly announced by two lusty savages, who beat the war-drum with such vigorous strokes that its thundering reverberations were almost deafening. The king was a man of about sixty years of age, and greeted the missionaries with as much stateliness as if

he had been the scion of civilized royalty. Prince Ademuyiwa then proceeded to declare the purpose of their visit, and after a great deal of unnecessary talk, the king's consent was obtained to begin Christian work in his city. Presents were exchanged, and the palaver closed amid a furore of shouts and music from the bewitching war-drum and tom-toms. The missionaries were greatly pleased with the appearance of the town. Its streets were cleaner, its houses better, and its people more civil than in other parts they had passed through; and though when they stirred abroad they were followed by immense crowds of curious natives, they were always preceded by a couple of the king's slaves with rattans, who kept the path clear from women and children by the bestowal of sundry and divers blows upon their heads and shoulders. Two or three days were spent in the place preaching, visiting, and arranging for future work, the king doing all that lay in his power to make the visit an agreeable one. Every day at least one palaver was held amid great displays of pomp and pageantry, and trifling presents flowed in from all quarters. At night they were entertained by the city oracle, a white-headed patriarch, who insisted on relating to them the story of a trip to Timbuctoo. This might have proved interesting enough had not the old fellow been rather too prolix. His tale was nearly as long as his travel. He described his reception at every village. At each river he had his story of difficulty and danger in constructing canoes or building bridges. He counted the minutes he lost in waiting for floods to subside, and catalogued the fish with which a certain stream abounded. At last he got himself into the forest, and described the various



animals he encountered to such an extent that when bed-time arrived he had not reached Timbuctoo.

The time came for the first pioneer missionaries into Jebu to resume their journey, Mr. Sutcliffe and Mr. Samuel proceeding to their respective stations, Abeokuta and Oyo, and Prince Ademuyiwa returning home to Lagos. The two former were given over to



VILLAGE SCENE.

the charge of a king's messenger, who went with them to secure their safety and to see that they got guides from one village to another. They stayed one night at a town called Ago, and early the next morning the Balogun scoured the town to get together a decent present for them. The other chiefs entered heartily into the affair, and at half-past eight an



imposing entry was made into Mr. Sutcliffe's quarters, the Balogun coming first, followed by two slaves bringing a demijohn of rum. How the carriers' eyes opened when they saw it! What blessed visions of carouses rose up before them! And how sadly did their countenances change when Mr. Sutcliffe politely declined to accept it! Even the Balogun's face fell at the refusal of his present, for he had made it out of the fulness of his heart as the most likely thing a white man would accept. An explanation that there were white men and white men soon set matters right, and the rum was exchanged for a ram.

In all the villages through which Sutcliffe and Samuel passed the natives received them with great hospitality, and staying at Oru for two days, waiting for the writer to join them from Jebu Ode, they had ample opportunities for preaching the Gospel of Christ to those who had never before heard the name of the world's Redeemer.

Mr. Sutcliffe was greatly encouraged by all he had seen and heard, and expressed a fervent desire to work in the new mission. "I am convinced," he often remarked to me as we rode along through the silent forests of Yorubaland, "that God will do great things for us in that country, and that there is a good future for our work if we grasp the opportunity." Later on in the year he wrote home, saying, "I hear that at Ikorodu there are already forty scholars attending school, and over thirty at Shagamu, which is an encouraging beginning." He had lived with me at Oyo for some weeks, and had seen how difficult it was for us to obtain scholars there. After three years' hard toil, during which one European, the Rev. A. C. Matthews (whose memory is still cherished in Oyo),

had laid down his life, our scholars did not number so many as the Ijebu schools, which had only been in existence three months. It was indeed a good beginning, but only a beginning. God had greater successes in store for the infant mission, and the country, that had long shut its doors in the face of Christianity, was to advance more quickly than the places that had received it years before.

In the meantime the Conference of 1892 had been held, and the late Rev. H. H. Richmond, being still greatly prostrated by his short sojourn on the coast, resigned the chairmanship of the Gold Coast and Lagos districts, his successors being the Rev. Dennis Kemp and Bryan Roe. Both were young men, and had not long been received into full connexion. But their work on the coast had been such as to inspire the Committee with great confidence in their administrative abilities, and events have since abundantly proved that this confidence was not misplaced.





## CHAPTER XV.

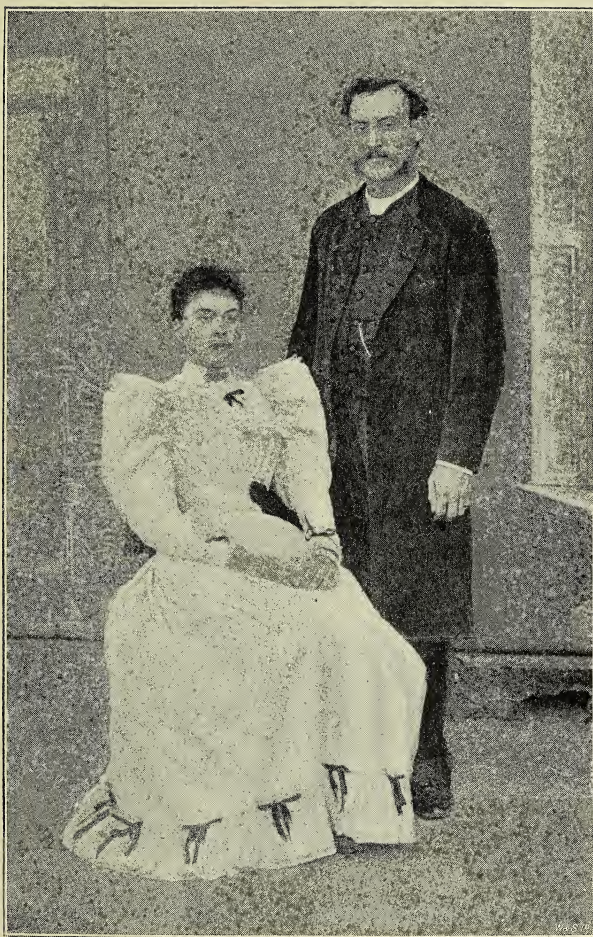
FOURTH TERM OF SERVICE—PROGRESS IN IJEBU,  
WITH SOME REMARKS ABOUT “DASHES”—A  
ROYAL RECEPTION FOR THE CHAIRMAN AND  
HIS BRIDE—AFRICAN SLAVERY.

ALL that was done in respect to the Ijebu Remo Mission by the missionaries mentioned in the last chapter was purely informal, and Prince Ademuyiwa financed the work until it was genuinely taken over by our own Society. In 1893 the Rev. Bryan Roe, now the Chairman of the District, arrived on the scene. An interesting event had occurred in his life during his sojourn in England—to wit, his marriage with Miss Margaret Seals, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Seals, of East Finchley. The wedding was celebrated almost on the eve of sailing for Africa, and the happy young couple spent their honeymoon, practically, in journeying to their sphere of work, for Mrs. Roe had heroically resolved to face the dangers of the West African climate by her husband's side, and to take her share of the sorrows and joys of a missionary's life. To carry on the work of the new mission, Mr. Roe was granted the services of the Rev. H. J. Ellis, Mr. W. H. Overs, and Mr. J. Bond,

of *The Joyful News*, and a one hundred pound bill-of-exchange for building purposes. As regards the men, it is not too much to say that a better choice could not possibly have been made. They were pioneer missionaries to the manner born. With respect to the money, it must be evident to the most sanguine mind that to carry on the work of a mission for twelve months on £100 was out of the question.

"But," said Mr. Roe, in one of his characteristic letters, "we were not by any means dismayed. We knew that God said 'Go on!' We were confident that He was leading us forward, and we determined to appeal to the generosity of the native Christians in Lagos. And our appeal was not made in vain. In less than nine hours they subscribed over £200! How shall I describe the spirit of these people? In almost any respectable street in England you could probably find more wealth than we have here, and yet this is how the people met us: 'Yes, of course we will give; if we do not give to God, to whom shall we give?' A native woman in a single cloth, whose whole earthly wealth would not have totalled £5, cheerfully gave us two guineas. A gentleman, not a member of our own Church, promised us £30, saying: 'I intended visiting England this year, but will delay my visit and give you part of what I should have spent.' Never in my life have I seen such quick, such generous, such sympathetic giving. The one cry was, 'It is for the Lord!' And this in a region that fifty years before knew nothing of the Gospel of Christ, and among a people whose grandparents and parents had been the slaves of a senseless idolatry. If but our Churches at home for one month realised their privilege, and denied themselves as these Lagos





MR. AND MRS. B. ROE.

Christians did, we could any year send a missionary to every large field in Africa. But all was not finished yet—gifts of iron, wood, and labour came also, and on the twenty-third of February, 1893, we were ready to set out on our enterprise. With what hopes and fears we started on that memorable Saturday morning! With what anxious thoughts we journeyed on! How should we be received? How would the work prosper? Or would it fail? No, perish the thought. Failure was not to be a word found in our vocabulary. We all felt that failure was impossible, though it had been whispered abroad that an enemy had been at work secretly prejudicing the mind of the king against us. But we fearlessly went on our course, and said, 'If God be for us, who can be against us?' And as we landed on the quay at Ikorodu, from every lip and from every heart there went up the earnest cry, 'God save Ijebu!'

Affairs were found to have progressed fairly favourably since the first visit of Mr. Sutcliffe, six months before, and the chiefs now formally confirmed to Mr. Roe the large plot of land previously given for mission purposes, promising at the same time to build him a church. It is satisfactory to note that most of the land given to us in Jebu was not subject to the rites and regulations customary in some parts of the Yoruba-speaking country, where an almost unlimited number of "dashes" (*i.e.*, gifts) must be made. The land is given, no doubt, but a *quid pro quo* is always expected. It is never sold, but you are called upon to pay for it in "dashes." The king, first of all, must be "dashed," and the king's brother; and the Bashorun and the Bashorun's brother; and the Balogun and the Balogun's brother;

and all the Bales and the Bales' brothers. Then, having disposed of the officials, and paid for the land twice over, your attention is called to the owner of the property and his brother. They will require to be "dashed"; and when you have "dashed" them, and they have got safely away with their booty, you probably hear with eminent satisfaction that the man was not the owner of the land at all—he had only a sleeping interest in it, so to speak; it belonged ages ago to his great-grandfather, who was sold up for debt. There will be two or three dozen different owners and their brothers on the scene, all demanding "dashes," but few receiving them. Then you receive a visit from the man who owns the property next door. His brother will come with him. His compound wall adjoins the land you have had given (*sic*) you, and if that is not a sufficient reason why a man and his brother ought to be "dashed," he will respectfully want to know what is. It has ever been a puzzle to me why the brother should always be brought in as a participator in the benefits of the dashing system, but that is evidently one of the hidden mysteries which will be revealed at a later stage of the world's history. At present he is there, and always there, when the business of "dashing" begins, and if it were possible for a Yoruban not to possess a brother, which is open to very serious doubt, I verily believe he would borrow someone else's for the occasion.

Mr. Roe's stay in Ikorodu was not a lengthy one, and having got through his business with greater expedition than is usual in Western Africa, he was ready to resume his journey on the Monday morning. Unfortunately, however, he discovered that he had two more loads than carriers. Messengers were sent



out to scour the town for volunteers, and returned after an hour's absence with one who looked suspiciously like a pressed man. He handled his load with a melancholy air, and cast longing glances in direction of a certain compound from which the sounds of merry-making were issuing. While debating what to do with the remaining load a man passed by, evidently bound for the interior, and was asked to join the sacred band. He refused on the ground that the company wasn't good enough, and this so enraged the carriers that they seized him, clapped the load upon his head, and compelled him to carry it whether he liked it or not, bestowing sundry severe kicks upon him whenever he seemed inclined to lag behind.

On reaching Ihaiye the missionaries halted for breakfast, but found, to their infinite dismay, that the man with the principal "chop-box" had not kept pace with them, and after waiting for some time Mr. Ellis set out in search of him. About a mile away he came across the carrier squatting comfortably upon a bank, bathing his feet in a stream of water. Mr. Ellis could not speak Yoruba, and the native could not understand English, so the language of signs—the universal Volapük—had to be resorted to, Mr. Ellis, in true clerical style, shaking his clenched fist fiercely in the man's face. Never did a man apprehend and obey a disagreeable order with greater alacrity than that native, and the hungry missionary, following hard on his heels, kept him fairly on the trot by means of swishing a handkerchief, and uttering an incomprehensible shout now and again.

On reaching Shagamu, the capital of the Jebu Remo country, the party were compelled to wait an



hour or two for the king's messengers, it being customary for a stranger to send word of his coming, and then for the king's messenger to escort him into the town, thus signifying that he is under the monarch's protection. It is a wearisome job sometimes, waiting for the messenger to arrive, for if the king happens to be asleep no one dare wake him to say that strangers are waiting without. On this occasion it might have been imagined that he had gone on a journey, so long did he keep his visitors at the city gates. Hungry and tired they patiently sat on their boxes, and listened with strange delight to a party of school children singing,

"Alafia, li aiye, ese yi?  
Eje Jesu nwipe, alafia,"

to the tune of "Peace, perfect peace," of which hymn the words are a translation.

The state reception by the king came off next day, and the missionaries were favoured with a view of his majesty seated on a throne. At least that was the name it went by, they were told. But for that information they might have doubted it, for it had all the appearances of an empty Huntley and Palmer biscuit box. The monarch was wearing a gaudy coloured robe of rich material, and had a covering for his head which completely hid his face from view, being surrounded by a thick, heavy fringe, which descended as far as his breast. In his right hand he held a superior sort of rattle, usually associated in this country with children of very immature years, and this he shook noisily whenever he was mightily pleased. Behind him stood a stalwart slave, shading the royal head from

the rays of the sun by means of a large scarlet-coloured umbrella, and several other servants were busily employed in driving off flies from the sacred person. Around him, in all conceivable postures, lay



THE KING OF ODE WITH HIS CHIEFS.

his wives, and standing near the biscuit box—I beg pardon, the Throne, with a capital T, please—were the chiefs and counsellors, with grave countenances and dignified bearing, which well befitted the solemnity of the occasion. If the handling of the baby's rattle produced the impression upon the

missionaries that the king was a man of infantile mind they were very much mistaken. He conducted the palaver in a business-like manner, and showed his possession of strong common sense by the remarkably shrewd questions he put as to the policy and work of the mission. As these were answered entirely to his satisfaction, and the grunts from the counsellors expressed strong approval, the mission was formally adopted as the king's mission, and raised to the dignity of the national church. The promise to build a place of worship was duly ratified, and the practice of offering human sacrifices, whether in public or private, was abolished. A very interesting ceremony also took place at this gathering, Ademuyiwa being installed as Otonba, or prince. He was this by right of birth, really, but owing to his absence from the country since childhood, had never been "called," so to speak. This ceremony recognised his claims, and placed him next the king in authority. In other words, he formally took his seat in the House of Lords, and his place among the peers of the realm. This, of course, was of immense advantage to our work, as in all future State deliberations Prince Ademuyiwa had a voice, and no resolutions concerning the mission could be carried into effect without his vote being recorded either for or against them.

With respect to slavery, which flourished in the Ijebu country, the missionaries found it necessary to proceed with the utmost caution. The subject was brought forward by the king at the above palaver, and Mr. Roe assured his majesty that it was no part of his work to interfere with native customs. His duty was to make men Christians, not to stir up political strife. There was a worse slavery than that imposed by the

hands of men, and he was there to endeavour to free the people from it by the power of the Gospel. It would be a task too heavy for me to undertake to give a full account of the origin and causes of slavery in Africa. As a national institution it seems to have existed from times immemorial. The sons of Ham seem to have been bondsmen everywhere ; and the oldest monuments bear their images linked with menial toil and absolute servitude. The customs and laws of the country encourage slavery, though not the slavery we read of in the pages of Harriet Beecher Stowe's immortal book, but slavery as a domestic affair. The rancorous family quarrels among tribes promote conflicts which strangely resemble the forays of our ancestors in feudal times, and the captives made therein invariably become serfs.

Besides this, as some writers have pointed out, the financial genius of Africa, instead of devising bank-notes or precious metals as a circulating medium, has for ages declared that a human creature, being the true representative and embodiment of labour, is the most valuable article on earth. "A man, therefore, becomes the standard of prices. A slave is a note of hand, that may be discounted or pawned ; he is a bill of exchange that carries himself to his destination and pays a debt bodily ; he is a tax that walks corporeally into the chieftain's treasury. Thus slavery is not likely to be soon surrendered by the negroes themselves as a national institution. As long as their social interests remain as they are, they will continue to maintain hereditary bondage ; they will sell the felon and the captive, and sentence to domestic slavery the disorderly, gamblers, witches, vagrants,



insolvents, the deaf, the mute, and the faithless. Five-sixths of the population, it has been asserted, are in bondage!"

I remember once helping a woman who had got into debt by the loan of a few pounds, and not being able to repay me, she came one day to my house, bringing a boy with her, whom she wanted to give me as a pawn for the amount. Had I accepted the offer the boy would have been mine until the money was forthcoming, the debt being in nowise lessened by his services. It is a crying evil is this system of pawning, for it may happen that one pawned in boyhood will remain in servitude all his life. If his parents do not care to release him, nobody else will, and he has but few opportunities in his servile state of earning money to redeem himself. Some men are veritable demons as regards this matter. So long as they have relations they pawn them, one by one, to support themselves, being too lazy to engage in honest toil, and swagger about in fine linen, and fare sumptuously every day at the expense of their family's freedom. Judgment, however, generally overtakes them in the long run, for having pawned all their near and dear relations, wives included, they are obliged at length to pawn themselves.

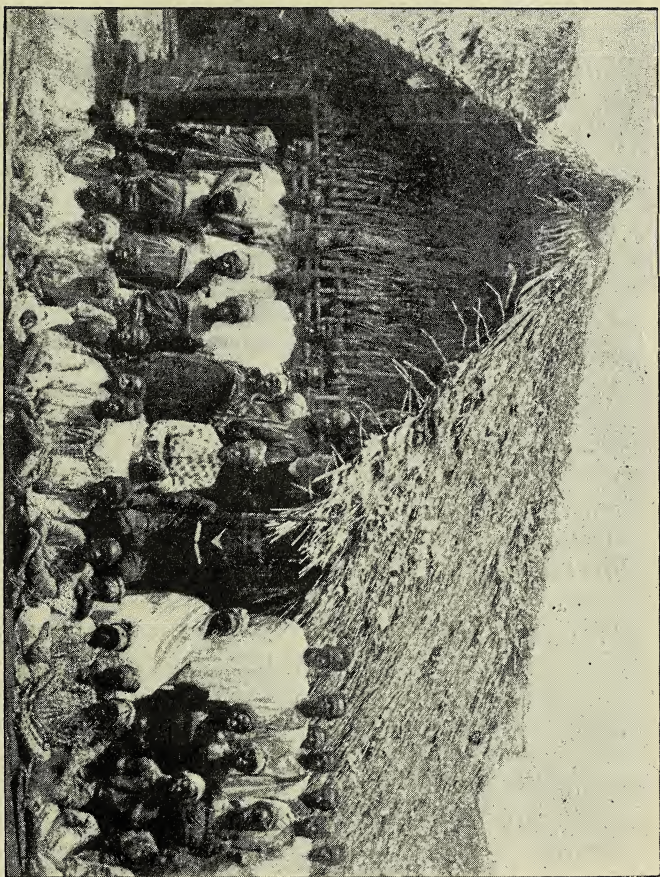
Candidates for matrimonial honours, who do not possess the wherewithal to purchase a wife, sometimes have recourse to this pawning method, and thereby run their necks into a double noose. They escape from one, however, when their firstborn arrives at years of discretion, for he forthwith takes his parent's place, and the loving father is set free to pawn his remaining children if the need arises.



## CHAPTER XVI.

INCIDENTS IN IJEBU—CHARMS AND FETISHES—  
THE MAN WHO COULD NOT BE KILLED.

THE duties of a chairman of an extensive foreign district are so multitudinous that his visits to a circuit may be said to resemble those of the angels, in that they are few and far between, and never of long duration. Mr. Roe had not been in the Jebu country many weeks before he was called to attend to other business elsewhere, and was compelled to take his departure. Before leaving, however, he had the unspeakable gladness of laying the foundation stones of two houses of prayer, and seeing some manifestations of the presence of God in the country. One incident occurred about this time at Shagamu, that well nigh marred the success of the work so auspiciously commenced. Hardly had the walls of the church been raised half-a-dozen feet high when a heavy rain fell, and almost washed them to the ground. The superstitious people looked upon this as a judgment, a visitation from the gods. "Ah!" said they, "see how angry the fetish is for receiving this new word!" They refused to go on with the building, and the work came to a sudden standstill. But the Lord



CHURCH AT ODE, WITH GROUP OF MEMBERS.



raised up help in a wonderful manner, and from a most unexpected quarter. Some doubts had been expressed as to the sincerity of the king, Akarigbo. He was held to have received the missionaries solely through fear of the Lagos Government, and was only waiting for a reasonable excuse to put down his foot and crush out the budding Christianity. And yet he was the very man that came to the help of the missionaries at this trying crisis in their work. Calling the people together to a grand palaver, he peremptorily commanded them to go on with the building. "This church must be erected," he said. "I have promised, and I will perform. If any man refuses to put his hand to this work I will come myself to that man's house and lay it in the dust."

It was not exactly the kind of threat that missionaries could heartily approve of, but it proved the king's sincerity up to the hilt ; and the result of his energetic interference was that fears and doubts were quelled, the schemes of fetish conspirators nipped in the bud, and soon large classes were formed, and two good day schools firmly established ; while on every hand there were abundant tokens of the people turning from idols to serve the living God.

The missionaries, however, were soon led to see that they were not to have it all their own way. The fetish priests were not inclined to resign their vested interest in sin and superstition without some show of resistance. This is ever the case. Since the day that the high priests of Jerusalem hounded Christ to the cross, and the guardians of the Caaba drove Mohammed from Mecca, the priest has ever been foremost in the fight against innovations that would lessen his prerogatives and power.



Plots soon began to gather around the agents of the mission. Dark and sinister threats were uttered, and more than one diabolical attempt at poisoning was made. The Europeans had to make it a hard and fast rule to eat nothing save what their own servants had cooked ; and on one occasion Mr. Overs was only saved from the knife of an infuriated fetish-man by the prompt action of his cook, Philip, who dealt the rascal such a tremendous blow between the eyes that he for ever after imagined he had been struck by lightning.

It was well for our missionaries, in those early days of the work, that they were surrounded by devoted and thoroughly trustworthy servants who were willing to risk life and limb in the defence of their masters. Had it not been so the roll of West African martyrs, already so lamentably long, would doubtless have been considerably augmented.

The ignorance and prejudice of the people at first was pitiful to a degree. It was met with at every point, and formed the very environment of the Mission. Matters of religious belief, however wrong they be, are not easy to correct. Generally they are of slow and gradual growth, and their roots strike deep. To alter them is to alter, in great measure, the habits and feelings of the people, to change the very current of their thought ; and to do this requires more than a week, or a month, or a year, for the faith of one's fathers is not surrendered suddenly as a rule.

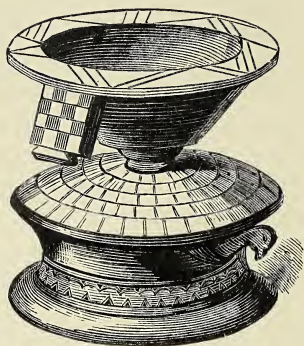
One poor woman attended the services of the Mission very regularly, and hopes were indulged that she would soon become a Christian. All at once she stopped coming. Her accustomed seat in the church

was vacant time after time, and enquiries were made as to the reason.

"I am coming no more," said the woman. "I am



IFA BOWL IDOL. |



IFA BOWL.

afraid of you."

"But why?" was the question asked. "Have we not always treated you kindly and fairly?"

"Oh, yes," admitted the woman; "but you have a

reason for it. You want to get possession of my bones to make handles for your knives and forks!"

Another woman, the wife of an Ifa priest, was on one occasion thought to be dangerously ill. The missionaries attended her, and by means of a few

simple remedies soon brought her back to health. In the fulness of her gratitude she fervently vowed to attend the services ; but days went by and she never came. It was found out afterwards that she had been warned by her husband not to go near the Mission premises. He conjured up a fearful picture of what would likely befall her if she disregarded his instructions.

“The white men will bewitch you,” he said, “and turn you into I know not what. They make men and women Christians first, and then turn them into evil spirits, snakes, and crocodiles.”

One of the first converts to openly profess allegiance to the white man's God was a woman who had been a worshipper of Oshun, the goddess of the sea. The articles necessary for a follower of this fair deity are eight white stones, two sacred combs, two hair pins, a piece of bone, and sixteen small cowries. Her ritual is, evidently, a pretty extensive one. The woman referred to came to the Mission-house one day, and handed in these articles, thus signifying her abandonment of fetishism, and her faith in Christianity. Strangely enough, the very next day she was smitten with smallpox, and her friends naturally regarded this as a token of Oshun's manifest displeasure at the imprudent step she had taken. They stated their views with great clearness and in forcible language, but the woman courageously replied, “I do not believe that fetish can possess a greater power than the God of heaven.”

Her friends, however, seemed hardly so sure upon that point, and besieged the Mission-house in the hope of getting the fetish returned. “You have bewitched the poor woman,” they declared ; “and the goddess

is angry. Give us back the fetish, and don't let the woman die."

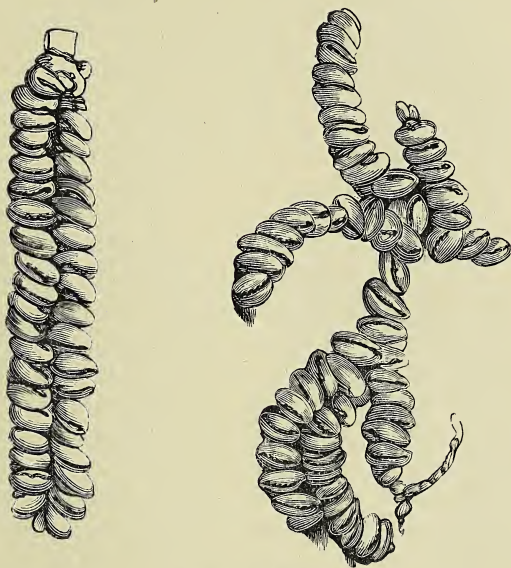
It was a critical moment in the history of the infant mission. It was a testing time ; it seemed as if the God of heaven had been put upon His trial, had been pitted against the power of the gods of heathendom. Realising all this, the missionaries felt that there was but one course open for them—to take up the challenge in the name of the Lord, and fight the matter out to the bitter end.

They accordingly refused to give up the fetish, and went to God in prayer. For days they attended to the woman with their own hands, refusing to allow any of her friends to approach her, for they were well aware that a hatred as deep as hell burned in some hearts, and that no deed of darkness would be left undone to gain a seeming confirmation of their views and prophecies. But God, who never forsakes His people in the time of their distress, stood by His servants through this trying period, and for the sake of His young and struggling Church, and for the sake of His moral cause in after ages, it pleased Him to work mightily on their behalf. The woman was snatched, as it were, from the very jaws of death, and as one result her husband, who had strenuously opposed her even attending the services, was so profoundly impressed and moved upon that ere long he himself gave up his fetishes, remarking, " They are no good. My wife's God shall be my God, and her people my people."

The faith the average native has in his fetishes is singularly strong, and puts to shame many a Christian man's faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. A gentleman once related to me the following incident,



which well illustrates the point : " I was walking out in the bush one afternoon, accompanied by my servant, and chanced to fall across a heap of cocoanuts, which had standing guard over them a short stick flying what seemed to be a remarkably dirty red cotton handkerchief. My walk had made me thirsty, and I



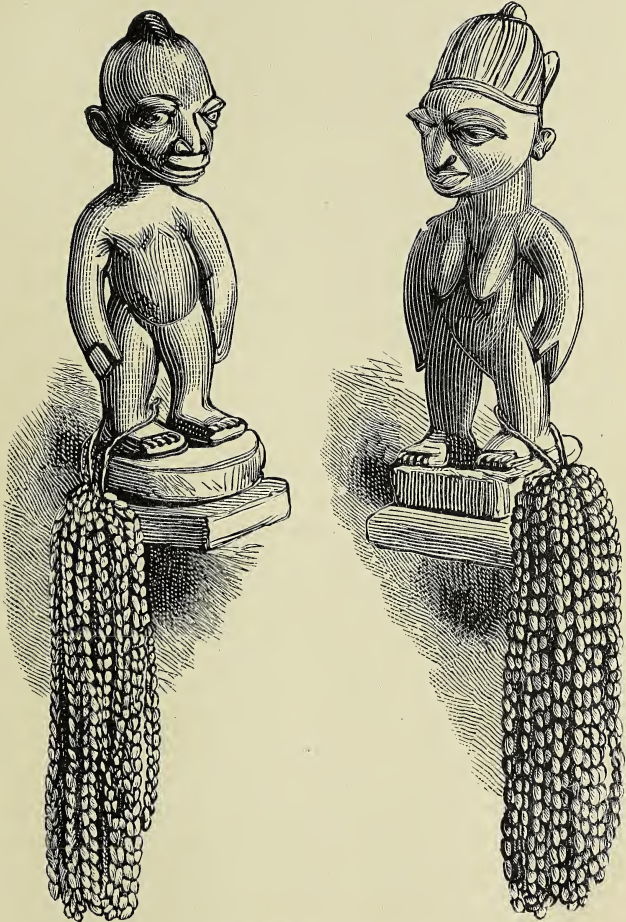
COWRY FETISH.

told the boy to open me a nut. To my astonishment he absolutely refused. Not because he thought it dishonest to do so, for the nuts, I daresay, were as much mine or his as anyone's. And besides, being a Kroo boy, he was not built that way. Honesty was not one of the virtues he was distinguished for. He apparently possessed thievish propensities to an unusual degree,

and an utter inability to discern the difference between the things which were his own and the things which belonged to others. I had long noticed that whenever anything was missing in the neighbourhood the losers always interviewed my boy first.

“‘Oh, go to Mr. B——’s boy!’ was the invariable cry. ‘He is sure to know something about it.’ And nine times out of ten they were right; he did. As a rule they had not to look much further than the bottom of his box to find the missing article, and if it didn’t happen to be there it was generally to be found somewhere about the premises. His refusal to touch the nuts, therefore, was not the result of any high ideals of honesty, but simply the presence of that stick and cotton handkerchief. Neither threats of punishment nor promises of reward could persuade him to go near them, his one cry being, ‘Fetish go kill me one time if me take nut.’”

A new fetish is often chosen before any great enterprise is undertaken, and if the enterprise is successful the fetish gains in respect. If it fails the fetish is sent back to its former state of obscurity. Not that faith in it is by any means destroyed. The people merely imagine that a more powerful fetish is working against it. During the Jebu war, for example, the natives were buoyed up by the hope that a most powerful deity was fighting on their side. They had propitiated it, the Lagos newspapers stated, with a wholesale slaughter of over two hundred helpless men and women, and success against the British arms seemed assured. In this, however, they were sadly mistaken; and the Maxim guns, manipulated by the expert hands of skilled Europeans, were quite a revelation to them. They were defeated with immense



IBEJI, THE TWIN GODS.

loss, but the reason they gave for this was that the white man had invoked a deity more powerful than their own. As a matter of fact it would require the assistance of any number of heathen deities to render a horde of untrained savages invincible against a gun that deals out death at the rate of six hundred shots per minute.

Coupled with this faith in fetish there is a deep-rooted belief in the efficacy of charms, though it is difficult at times to discriminate between the two, the terms being often interchangeable. In the main, however, it may be said that a fetish is supposed to have behind it the power of some particular deity, but is not its representative on earth, as an idol is believed to be; while a charm is any article which has received the blessing of a priest, or which is supposed to possess inherent virtues peculiarly its own. The priests, therefore, are generally the vendors of charms, which are almost universally worn, and drive a remarkably brisk business. The young lover wears one to render his suit successful, and the young lady sports another to save herself from being jilted; the farmer purchases one to protect his crops, and the trader requires a different sort to enable him to get the better of his customers. Some people adorn their person with half a dozen or more, each one having a particular duty to discharge. I was acquainted with a prince whose arms were literally covered with charms in the shape of iron, brass, and earthenware rings. One of these articles protected him against smallpox, another from guinea-worm (though it was evident he had suffered from both these things), a third rendered him invincible in battle (though he had often been defeated, if tradition



is to be relied on), and a fourth made it impossible for any man to kill him. He was supremely proud of this charm, and bragged about it in a most unconscionable manner. And there was reason for it. It had never deceived him as the others had ; he was still alive, though he bore on his body the scars of many contests.

"No gun, no arrow," he loudly boasted, "can shoot me, and no sword ever forged can slay me."

"Are you sure of that?" I enquired of him one day.

"Yes," he answered confidently, "quite sure."

I took down my gun from behind the door, and pushed a couple of cartridges in.

"Come, then," I said, "stand up against that wall, and I'll have a shot at you" ; and I levelled the gun at him. "No, no, no !" he cried vehemently. "Stop, stop !"

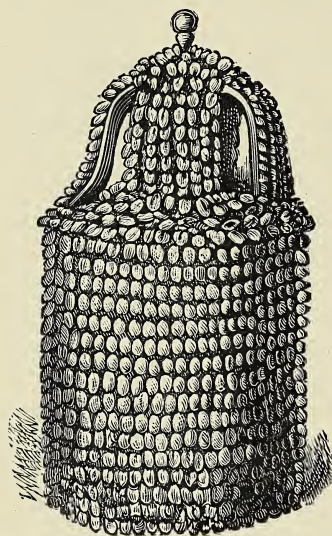
"But," I remarked, provokingly, "you say I cannot hurt you. What are you alarmed about? Come, now, stand up there, and be shot like a man." And I pulled the trigger to half-cock. But his Royal Highness would have none of it—not for himself, at any rate, though he considerably offered to allow me to operate upon one of his slaves.

"Come here, Taiwo," he kindly said ; "put this ring on your arm, and let the white man shoot you."

But even Taiwo did not seem to jump at the proposal. It was an honour that he would, to all appearances, have greatly declined. He looked a remarkably mournful man as his master slipped the magic ring over his arm, and stood him up against the wall.

"Now, white man," cried the prince, with a radiant smile, "shoot away."

Taiwo appeared to look all ways at once, and seeing an open window near at hand, he uttered a dismal howl, and made for it with the greatest possible speed. Before the prince had time to intercept him he made a sudden spring, and bolted through it like a flash of lightning.



THE GOD ORI.

He sprinted to the compound gate at a rate that would have broken the world's records for short distances, and took good care not to return again that day.

"No faith in the charm," you naturally exclaim. But is there not such a thing as mixing faith with unfaith? I have in my mind an earnest band of Christian believers, who were assembled on a memorable occasion in Jerusalem, praying for the Lord

to rescue Peter the Apostle from prison; and when it pleased God to answer their prayers no one was more surprised than they. They were met for no other purpose than to offer prayers, which they professed were prayers of faith, for Peter's deliverance; and when Peter stood before them in flesh and blood, they all, with one consent, exclaimed, "It is his ghost!"

Not long ago I was walking down a country lane with two ladies, and one of them picked up an old, well-worn, and very rusty horseshoe.

"Oh, here's luck!" she exclaimed, and the rusty piece of old iron was carried carefully home, furbished up, and hung with ribbons behind the dining-room door.

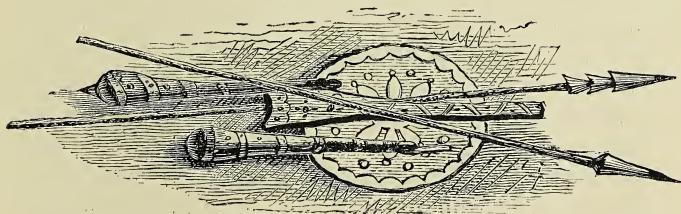
I said to her: "Do you really believe the course of Providence will be altered because of that worthless article?"

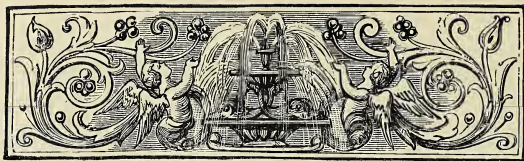
"Well, no," was the rather dubiously-given answer.

"Then throw it out of the window," I advised.

"Oh, no!" she said. "It may do no good, but at any rate it won't do any harm, and if there is anything in it we may as well have the benefit of it as not."

Now that was not in Western Africa. That occurred in Christian England, in a country where the Gospel has been preached and believed in for nearly a thousand years. And if superstitions die as hard as that here, what are we to say of their power in a land that has listened to the Gospel for only half a century?





## CHAPTER XVII.

MORE ABOUT IJEBU—A MEMORABLE SERVICE—THE  
KING THAT WAS ALMOST A BACHELOR.

UNDER the fostering care of Messrs. Roe, Ellis, Bond, and Overs, assisted by a staff of intelligent and godly native agents, the Jebu Remo mission flourished successfully, and in a very short time quite overshadowed the Yoruba interior work, commenced a few years before. This was due in some measure to the geographical and political situation of the country, being much nearer the coast, and its people practically under the protection of the British flag, though nominally independent. They did not stand so much in awe, therefore, of the native authorities as they in Yoruba cities did. The petty kings, too, encouraged their subjects to listen to the preaching of the Gospel, and placed no obstacles in the way of their becoming converts to the new faith. In Yorubaland Mr. Roe found a very different condition of affairs, and, all things considered, he was not surprised to find the work there progressing so painfully slow. He saw that while there was no open hostility manifested, there was nevertheless a deep under-current of opposition to contend with, which showed itself in



various ways, and was all the worse for being apparently unofficial. While at Ogbomoso he had occasion to visit a heathen compound in which two of our catechumens lived, and to offer there a severe remonstrance against the persecution they were being subjected to. After preaching in the chapel on the Sunday morning of his visit, a native rose up from his seat and publicly announced his intention of becoming a Christian. "But," said he pathetically, "pray for me, for my people will bitterly oppose me in this, and perhaps poison me if I persist in my purpose."

Many persons informed Mr. Roe that they were not indifferent to the preaching of the Gospel, but they feared they would be quietly put to death if they forsook their idols. And in a country where no inquests are held, and no awkward questions asked when a man dies suddenly and mysteriously, there is every reason for believing the statement.

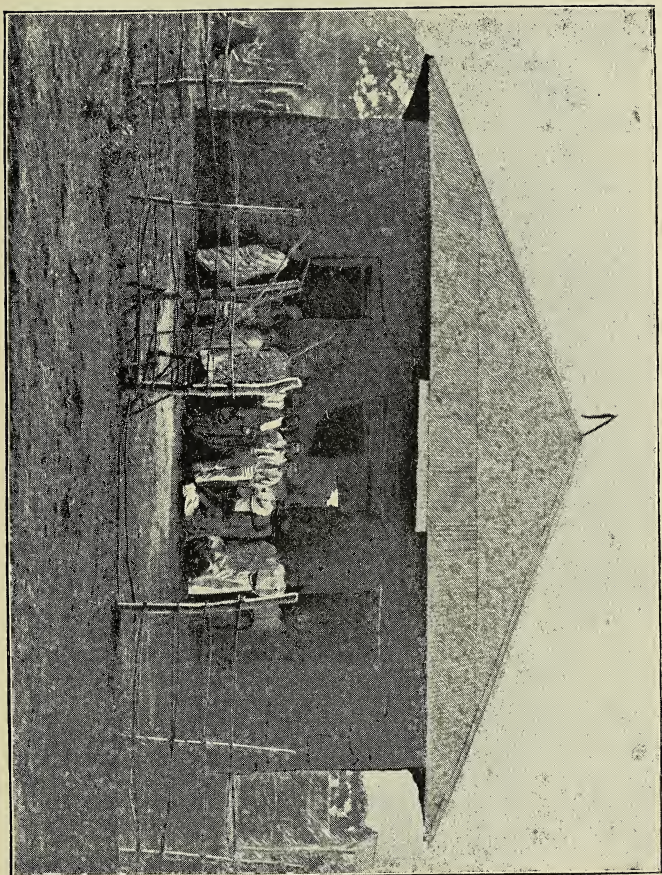
At Fiditi, Mr. Roe met another man who was under deep conviction of sin, really in a state of spiritual distress; but he did not dare decide for Christ, owing to fear of ill-treatment. He was about to be married to a heathen girl, he told the Chairman, but her family had threatened to break off the match if he professed faith in Jesus. "Surely God is at work!" Mr. Roe was constrained to exclaim, "else why do the heathen rage, and why does Satan trouble us so much?"

In Jebu this opposition was not nearly so strong after the first few months, though it was strong and bitter enough during that time, and converts were made much more rapidly than in Yoruba. Several other towns were occupied in which churches were built by the natives themselves, mostly heathen, yet

having some faint glimmering of the light, and testifying in this practical manner to their eagerness to have more.

Every eighth day the Ikorodu market was held, to which the people came bearing loads of palm oil and kernels, vegetables, goats, cattle, etc. After disposing of these they gave a day before returning home to the building of the church, and soon it was ready for the opening. Mr. Roe went up for the occasion, and at the first service 250 persons were present, who spent nearly four hours in the varied proceedings of the morning.

"To look upon that congregation," Mr. Roe writes in his account of the matter, "was a sight calculated to produce deep feelings. I was greatly impressed at seeing such a congregation and church building, and so large a company of school children singing our grand old hymns, and reading intelligently the Word of God. Then, as I began to single out individuals in the congregation, I was vastly struck with its mixed elements. To my right sat the dethroned Oloja, or kinglet, who had at first feared to come to church without an escort, anticipating insult from the people, such as he had been subjected to on former occasions. But he had come, and was learning what civilising influences Christianity possessed, for no insults were now offered. There sat a company of young Christian men from Lagos, showing by dress, appearance, and devout actions what Christ had done for them. Here a company of godly women who had undertaken the journey to Jebu solely to join this glad ceremony of opening a new church in a heathen country. Near to them were two white-robed women, somewhat timid and subdued in manner. They were



NEW CHURCH, IKORODU.



candidates for baptism this day. Around them sat, or squatted, many heathen natives, some of them earnest searchers after truth, others impelled only by curiosity. Further back still I noticed men and women, on their way to or from the market, carefully guarding their goods and chattels, and listening meanwhile with wondering ears and staring eyes to the new and strange truths of the Gospel; then, after an hour or so, picking up their loads and starting off for their distant homes, there, it may be, to tell the tidings they have heard, and thus unconsciously sow the seed of what may some day result in an abundant spiritual harvest.

“But the service proceeds. With joy I baptize seven into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, Mr. Ellis having first explained in a short address the meaning of the rite; and as I look at these few among the first-fruits of the great harvest yet to come, my heart is lifted up in a fervent prayer, the one petition of which is, ‘Lord keep them; in Thy love and grace keep them!’

“Next, of course, comes the inevitable collection. The people are mostly poor, but I should like to analyse that collection if space permitted. The young men from Lagos begin it, and soon they give £5. Then there is a lull, and for a moment I wonder if the people on the spot intend to do anything. But very soon up jumps the Oloja’s confidant and companion, himself a heathen, and with impassioned eloquence calls upon his countrymen not to allow the visitors to do more for their church than themselves, and concludes his peroration in practical form by a gift of five shillings. Then there is a running fire of



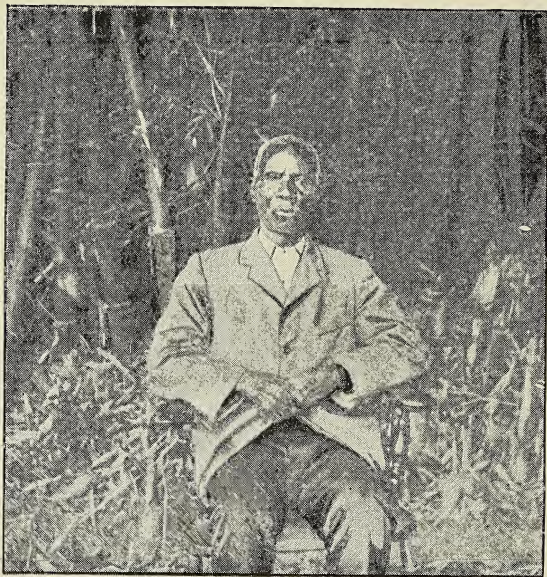
promises, many of them indicating much self-sacrifice ; but the one which touched our hearts most, perhaps, and that nearly drew tears from our eyes, was that of a boy who stood up to say, 'The school children promise five shillings.'

"On looking over the list I find that the gifts take a wide range, from one pound sterling down to a halfpenny's worth of cowries, and some "live" money in the shape of ducks and fowls. The total altogether exceeds £11.

"After this the Christians still linger, as if loth to leave the place ; it is the first Sabbath of the month, and around the table of our blessed Lord we consecrate our lives anew to God and His service, as we partake of the sacred symbols of Christ's most precious body and blood."

"At Shagamu," he continues in a further account, "the capital of the country, much has been done ; a new church has been built, and some fourteen full members are in communion with us, and one on trial. We have also fifty-two catechumens and forty-nine juniors meeting in class. Beyond this, at Iperu, the present headquarters of the Joyful News Mission, much activity is manifested. Brothers Overs and Bond have acquitted themselves here right manfully, and a vast improvement is noticeable in the place. On my first visit here, only a few months ago, dead bodies were often thrown into the public streets, and left there to rot away or be eaten by the carrion, thus creating most offensive smells, and rendering health and life very uncertain things. I was fearful for the safety of brother Overs when I left him in charge, remembering as I did that no Wesleyan mission had ever yet been established in Western Africa without

the sacrifice of, at least, one European life. But Overs rose to the occasion, and persuaded the king to alter such a shocking state of affairs, so that soon a law was issued compelling all dead bodies to be removed and decently buried outside the town walls in the heart of



DADDY WILLIAMS, AGENT AT SHAGAMU.

the forest. Another thing that filled me with pleasurable amazement was the quiet stillness of the town on the Christian Sabbath day. I have recollections of the first Sabbath I spent there in February, '93, when the air was simply full of deafening noises, the beating of tom-toms and tin pans, the blowing of horns, and the shouting of men and women in heathen processions

creating such a perfect pandemonium of sound that I was almost driven mad. No processions are now allowed on the Sabbath day, and musical—save the mark—instruments are forbidden in the open streets. Another beneficial law has also been passed through the energy and influence of brother Overs, viz : that knives shall not be carried about by the people. In quarrels knives were freely and frequently brought into use, and many were the ugly gashes inflicted upon the contending parties. Mr. Overs pointed out the folly and danger of the practice, and knives were accordingly forbidden.

“A beautiful and commodious ‘Joyful News Home’ rewards the manual labours of brother Overs, while not far from it stands a temporary church school. There are three full members, 35 juniors, 30 catechumens, 50 dayschool scholars, and a weekly congregation of over 300. I preached on the Sunday morning, and among the audience was the king, who came in state—that is, preceded by a band of slaves, one of whom solemnly pounded the inevitable tom-tom, and attended by a company of chiefs whose general appearance seemed to betoken abject poverty and a disinclination to the use of soap. The king himself even did not present the aspect of a man that was too well off in this world’s possessions, and it was confidentially whispered in my ear that he was by no means a wealthy man, “for,” said my informant significantly, “he has only six wives!” Dear me! Only six wives! And a king, too! Why, he is quite a gay young bachelor!

“I cannot write much more in detail just now. Suffice it to say that after less than three years’ toil in Jebu Remo there are 7 churches, 2 ministers, 8 lay

agents, 58 full and accredited members, 13 on trial, 208 juniors, 219 catechumens, 362 day and Sunday school scholars, and nearly 2,000 in attendance upon public worship."

It was with feelings of intense joy and profound thankfulness that Mr. Roe returned to Lagos from this second Ijebu visit, and yet there was a cloud that seemed to overshadow his mind. He saw the vast possibilities of the work in the country he had just come from, but was straitened in means. Doors were open on every side, but he could not enter them. There were outstretched hands and appealing eyes, and eloquent lips crying out for they knew not what, but dimly conscious of a great need, and he knew how that need could be supplied, but alas! he had not the means. Men he possessed in abundance, but no money. "We are almost at our wits' end," he passionately cried, "to know how to maintain our present position, to say nothing of meeting the calls for further extension. Will some of God's treasurers come forward to our aid? Help, brethren, help, and let us win Ijebu Remo for Christ our Lord!"

"He was much harassed at this time," writes Mr. Ellis, "concerning financial matters generally, and specially with reference to Ijebu, and reluctantly informed me that I must face the possibility of one, or, perhaps, even two stations being closed. This he was not willing to do without a final effort, and he arranged to go round with me to some of our leading Lagos laymen to once more solicit their generous and practical support. Sickness, however, laid its grip upon him, and he was prevented. But his joy was unbounded when I was able to announce to



him that all anxiety for a year, at any rate, was at an end as regards Jebu, some £60 having been promised."

Ijebu, without doubt, was the object of his particular love, for it was in one sense his own mission, having been commenced during the term of his chairmanship. Though begun through the energy of Messrs. Sutcliffe, Ademuyiwa, and Samuel, he had had a large hand in helping Mr. Ellis in establishing it on a firm foundation, and the deep interest he ever took in it is manifested by the number of letters the superintendent has in his possession, dealing with the various phases and issues of the work. It was nearer, too, than any of the other circuits, and he was consequently more in touch with it. His visits to it were frequent, and always characterised with much fervency and spiritual power; and Mr. Ellis cheerfully and gratefully acknowledges the great help he received from his Chairman, with whom he lived on terms of brotherly intimacy.

"The whole of my short ministerial career," he says, "has been spent under the care of Bryan Roe to whom I owe a debt I could never have paid. Of his never-failing kindness it is impossible for me to speak too highly; to come to his house and spend a few days in the company of himself and his wife was a joy and privilege that I shared in greater degree than any of my colleagues. Many times, as an inexperienced missionary labouring in a fresh field, I have applied to him for advice, and it always proved wise and good. In all my difficulties, great and small, he was a hearty sharer and sympathiser, and in the successes and encouragements he joined as if his own. Nothing was too trivial for him to give

attention to, his whole aim in life seeming to be to further the cause of God in every place under his care ; and the prosperity of my circuit is owing in no small measure to the help, advice, and encouragement I ever received at his hands."



ENTRANCE TO AN IJEBU TOWN.



## CHAPTER XVIII.

### FIRST JOURNEY TO YORUBA—A CASTOR-OIL STORY —DEVOURING DEMONS—SATAN'S FOUNTAIN.

MR. ROE'S first visit to the great Yoruba country and its missions took place early in 1895. He had often purposed making the journey, but the cares, responsibilities, and manifold duties of his office as Chairman of a foreign district had hitherto prevented him. However, after the Synod of 1895 had been brought to a successful conclusion, preparations were made, and early one February morning a party of missionaries and carriers streamed out of the Lagos Mission House *en route* for the interior. It was arranged for them to travel *via* Abeokuta, as Mr. Sutcliffe, who formed one of the party, had business to settle there before marrying and returning to England on furlough.

"Of the journey to Abeokuta," says Mr. Roe in his journal, "there is little new to relate, save that on the first night we stayed at a village called Agege, and I slept beneath the piazza of a native chief's house. As I lay there my mind went back to 1886, when, as chaplain to the Lagos prison, I attended the last moments of two fine young men who paid the penalty

of the law for murder committed on this very spot."

On entering the town of Abeokuta, a sight was seen that served well to keep in the minds of the white men that they were in Africa still, and that wrongs remained to be righted, and evils to be rooted out; as well as to remind them that the influence of the old days of European tyranny was yet bearing fruit. By the side of the gate lay a man helplessly bound, and bleeding from the blows of the cruel lash. What evil had he done? Had he stolen property or taken life? Not at all! He was a slave who had made a bold dash for liberty. He had tried to escape to the shelter of the Union Jack waving its folds of freedom in the country beyond. Had been tracked day by day, and caught at last in the sickening swamps of Pappata, brought back, beaten nearly to death, and laid in chains at the public gate as a warning to other aspirants for liberty.

Seven years had passed since Bryan had last visited the great Egba metropolis, and he failed not to observe some changes that had occurred. One great difference he noted was in the market-places, where gin and rum were being sold by the glass from almost every shed, or wherever a woman was to be found with a calabash and a few paltry goods for sale.

"This," he exclaimed, "is the town which some five or six years ago closed the roads to spirits, but was compelled by a commercial treaty to open its doors; and this is the dire result. A letter now lies before me of one who knows well this region and Lagos, stating that there is scarcely a family which has not some sad tale to tell of the injury that strong drink has wrought of late years, and he adds that in



our Home Mission stations this proclivity to drink is destroying our work. Can you wonder that we, who know and see these things, and whose Churches are thus being robbed, whose efforts are thus being rendered powerless, look on with grief and indignation when we see a great European Power bolstering up this traffic which is affecting men both for time and eternity?"

The seven years' interval spoken of, however, had been years of spiritual progress, thanks in a great measure to the fostering care of Mr. Sutcliffe and his native colleagues; but it was evident that the circuit laboured under the heavy disadvantage of losing constantly its best and brightest young people. "No sooner do they become enlightened, educated, and Christianised, than, finding no suitable sphere for their abilities, they drift to Lagos and other coast towns to work in factories, stores, offices, or as carpenters, smiths etc. Yet who can tell what blessed influence they carry as they pass east, west, north, and south, bearing with them the news of the precious Gospel?"

Eruwa was the next stage of the journey, and *en route* Mr. Roe witnessed a sight that sent a saddening thrill through his liberty-loving breast, a company of thirty small children being driven like a flock of sheep to Abeokuta, to be publicly sold there, next morning, in the open market. "But," adds Mr. Roe hopefully, "the value of slaves is daily decreasing, and soon, I trust, they will be worth nothing." This is owing, no doubt, to the fact that it has become known that as soon as a slave's foot touches British territory he is a free man, and whenever an opportunity occurs the slaves take to their heels in the direction of Jebu Ode or Lagos.

Eruwa does not show its appreciation of Christianity as other native towns do, and probably the reason for this lies in the fact that the people are the poorest and most ignorant of the Yoruba-speaking tribes. They are notoriously superstitious, and absolutely enslaved by fetishism and idolatry. "I found no members," says Mr. Roe, "and only twelve catechumens, and they were a poor sample."

Esi Ado was reached a few days later, and the scenery was such as to lead the missionaries to imagine that they were among the hills and dales of Scotland, though the wretched huts and evil smells were sufficient to soon dispel the pleasant illusion. It is one of the places to which the words of the poet might well be applied :

Distance lends enchantment to the view.

The town is built on a high rock, which is inaccessible except in one place, and even there a portion of the climb has to be done on all-fours. Not many years ago, Mr. Halligey and the late Mr. A. C. Matthews were cruelly stoned from above as they were attempting to reach the heights, and to this day there is not a Christian in the place, or any one that really knows what Christianity means. A few miles away there is a site of great historic interest to the natives, viz., the battlefield of Iwo Awon, where a terrible fight took place some years back, when the natives of the region fought for their liberty, and lost it to the Ibadans.

The next stopping place was Iseyin, and a few days were spent in persuading the king to keep an old-standing engagement to build a chapel. Mohammedanism has gained a strong hold upon the place, and the king's inclinations lean towards the religion

of the Prophet, services being conducted every day in the palace by the white-turbaned missionaries.

At Oyo, however, Mr. Roe found a neat church, a nearly finished house for a European, and some sixty members and catechumens. Out of a population of nearly 100,000 this number appears poor and insignificant, but no one can tell what this means save those who have toiled through years in this dark land, and understand the great difficulties with which the missionaries have to contend. "I preached to some fifty people in our church," says Mr. Roe, "and received many testimonies of the blessings gained in Christ Jesus. I have high hopes of Oyo, hut it needs an increased staff—we should multiply our agents by ten, but we have not the means." I hear in those words the echo of the voice of the dying Waterhouse, "Missionaries! Missionaries! Missionaries!"

After a flying visit had been paid to Ogbomoso the party turned its face homewards, travelling *viâ* Fidite and Ibadan, having been reinforced by Miss Alberta Newton, a daughter of the Rev. C. C. and Mrs. Newton, who had laid down their lives the year before for the sake of West African missions. I do not doubt that the journey was full of interest and romance for her, as she was travelling down to be married, at Lagos, to the present Chairman of the District, the Rev. J. D. Sutcliffe.

In some of the villages through which the party passed it was found that the chiefs possessed only one idea of the use of white men, and that was a wrong one. They innocently imagined that white men only existed in order to make black men expensive presents. At one place, where a night was passed, the chief was most solicitous in his begging.

He seemed to have reduced the practice to a fine art, and asked for anything and everything. At last he fastened his greedy eyes upon a bottle of castor-oil which one of the native servants was carrying. He had never seen anything like that before, and it looked so very inviting. He could see it was not gin, but probably thought it was something better.

"I want that!" he politely remarked, holding out his hand. "But it is medicine," objected the servant.

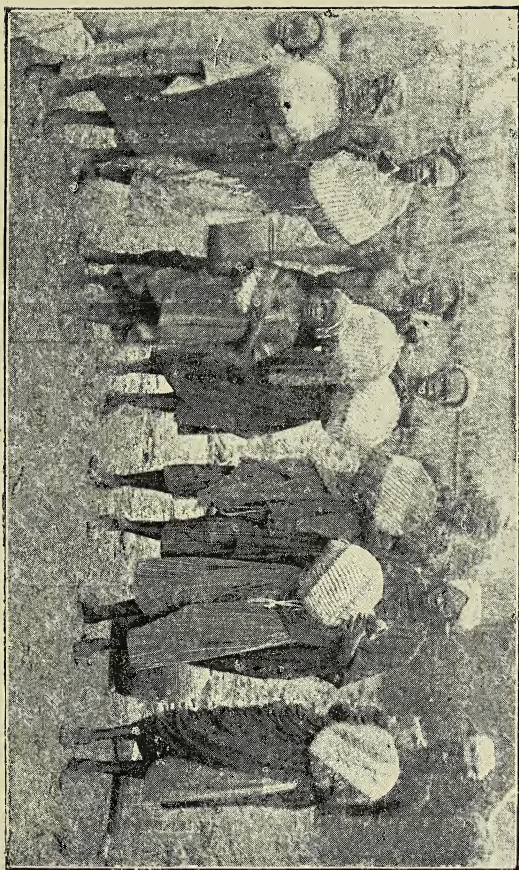
"I don't care if it is poison; I want it!" returned the chief; and to satisfy the man's craving, the servant handed it over to him with the remark, "Well, now you've got it I hope you will drink it."

His hope was fulfilled, for the chief, pulling out the cork, smelt the fluid and smiled with satisfaction. "Good!" he ejaculated, "very good! Just watch me drink it." And in five seconds the entire contents of the bottle had disappeared down his capacious throat. "Have a drop more!" suggested the servant hospitably. "There's plenty left in the box." But the chief smiled in a sickly sort of fashion, and thought he had had enough for one dose. Shortly afterwards he disappeared in a somewhat mysterious manner, and was not seen any more that evening; but next morning some very high words passed between him and the native servant.

At another village Mr. Roe was allotted an apartment for the night, and discovered in it the dead body of a man, which was rapidly rotting away. He felt obliged to decline the courtesy, and asked the owner of the house, "Why in the world don't you bury your father?"

"Alas!" replied the man, sorrowfully, "I am not





SHIKARI DANCERS.

rich enough at present. I must wait until I have money to make custom."

Custom consists in preparing a great feast, which lasts from three to seven days, and to which all the neighbourhood is invited. A band of tom-tom players are engaged, and they sit on the ground pounding their drums in a melancholy sort of manner, while at intervals a detachment of hunters enliven the proceedings by firing off a round of cartridges. Now and then the drums are beaten softly, the artillerymen cease firing, and above the low drumming there rise the mournful notes of a solemn funeral dirge, the voices now loud and then sinking lower and lower until they die away in a sobbing, plaintive moan. Then the tom-tom men get to work again, and as if to make up for lost time they punch their wooden tubs more vigorously than ever.

The bodies, as a rule, are buried in the people's houses or compound, and in the grave are placed a goat or a fowl, cowries (to pay tolls), pipe, and tobacco, and a calabash of water or beer. The dead man is thus comfortably equipped for his journey to the other world, and has no need to re-visit the one he has left in search of food. Details in the funeral proceedings are looked very carefully after, for the slightest omission offends the defunct, and he shows his resentment by assuming the shape of an evil spirit, and haunting the neighbouring bush, where he eats up any unprotected person who may be foolhardy enough to venture forth without a lighted torch or lantern. To make matters worse, the party thus eaten up becomes in turn an evil spirit, and he, too, engages in the gentle pastime of devouring unwary wayfarers. It will easily be seen, therefore,

that by this method of multiplication there is a vast army of destroying demons roaming at large within the radius of a few miles of any given place.

I was once informed that the neighbourhood in which I lived was infested by a legion of these genial cannibals. The bearer of this comforting intelligence arrived at my house, one dark night, in a state of perfect terror and exhaustion. He was quite breathless, having run a considerable distance, and on my enquiring, "Why this haste?" he told me that he had been chased by a devil. It was a miracle, he said, that he had not been eaten up, for his torch, his sole protection, had suddenly gone out and left him completely at the mercy of the powers of evil. His legs alone had saved him. I told him I did not believe there were any fiends in my district, but he promised to show me some if I would accompany him home; and being possessed of a curious and somewhat enquiring turn of mind, I went with him. We turned down a darksome lane, flanked on either side by very tall grass, and had not proceeded far when my companion suddenly stopped and grasped my arm.

"Look, white man, look!" he cried in a low, thrilling voice. "Look, the devil!"

I looked, and saw what seemed to my uninitiated eye remarkably like a fire-fly flickering in the distance. "Oh!" I observed cheerfully, "*that's* a devil, is it? Well, why don't you hit it with a stick?"

The very suggestion terrified the man, and when we arrived at his compound gate he was in a most melancholy frame of mind. "Good-night and good-bye!" he dismally remarked. "Neither of us will live to see to-morrow. We shall both be eaten up before

then." And with that comforting prophecy sounding in my ears I returned home.

While Mr. Roe was not honoured with a personal view of his Satanic majesty as I had been, he was privileged during this interior journey to see one of the habitations in which he was supposed to dwell. One evening, as the party drew nigh unto a village, a carrier stated that not far away there was a sacred spring of water known as Satan's Fountain, and that the evil one lived in a cave near by. As daylight enough still remained to allow a visit to the spot, Mr. Roe rode off, accompanied by a host of carriers and men from the village. About a mile away they struck the foot of a small hill, and crossing over, entered a dark and lonesome dell, through which a slender stream of hot and apparently sulphurous water slowly trickled. At the far end was the shell of a huge rock, the inside having been hollowed out so as to form a deep cavern, and from it the sulphurous stream issued. This was the sacred fountain, and the Satanic individual who presided over it dwelt within the gloomy cave. Whilst Bryan was looking about him the guide apprised him of the fact that the impish proprietor was a skilled linguist, and would reply to him in his own language if he thought fit to address him. "He will answer you word for word," said the native.

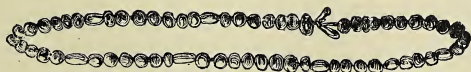
"Indeed," returned Roe. "Then I will give him a call if he is at home."

Suiting the action to the words, he entered the cavern and took up his position at a spot where he knew the echoes would be redoubled. He then called out for his followers to listen, and bellowed with all his might certain epithets the reverse of complimen-



tary to the object of his visit. The resounding echoes roared again with demoniac responses, and in a moment the dell was clear of every African, who fled helter-skelter from the dreadful place. Mr. Roe amused himself for a while letting off yells, howls, and screams, until the affrighted natives peeped into the dell, thinking that Satan really had come for their master in a double-breasted garment of thunder and lightning. He came forth, however, laughing loudly at their alarm, and was immediately surrounded by the natives, who regarded him with wonderment, as something greater than Satan himself. He explained to them the reason of the supposed replies, and did something towards shaking their faith in the existence of the personage in possession of the sulphur stream.

His adventure gained him great respect in the village, and on leaving next morning he was treated with supreme honour, for the head chief escorted him on his way to the first brook, and there took leave of him in high-class style. He drank of the water with the wayfarer, toasted him a prompt return, invoked the gods for a prosperous journey, shook hands with him, and snapped his fingers in token of friendly adieu. Then, taking his post in the path, he fixed his eye on the departing party, and never stirred until it was lost in the folds of the forest. Such is the African method of "speeding the parting guest."





## CHAPTER XIX.

### THE DRINK TRAFFIC—WHISKY AND COCKTAILS— THE FIRST BAND OF HOPE.

UNTIL towards the end of Bryan Roe's life there had been no organised temperance work connected with our Church in the Lagos district, and it may be that with missionaries there is a danger of overlooking that department of Christian work. With so many great and glaring evils to contend with, organised effort in relation to the drink traffic is apt to be sadly neglected. In semi-civilised towns, or in places like Lagos, where there are quite a number of Europeans and a great many natives of European tastes and habits, the need of temperance work is very forcibly borne in upon the missionary, as he sees some of the choicest and best men of both nationalities ruined by the curse of strong drink, and notices the ever growing use of it in the social circle.

Whisky, I am sorry to say, so far as Europeans are concerned, is almost an institution on the coast. Everybody recommends it to the new comer as a remedy against nearly all the ills that human flesh is heir to, and none with greater eloquence than the man who is really and truly fond of it. The number of

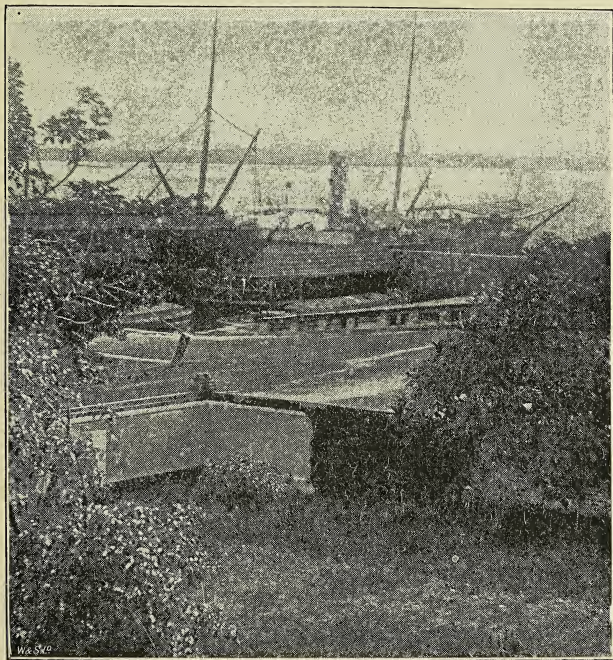
instances he can quote where whisky has saved men's lives when everything else had failed is surprising. One is always inclined to think after conversing with such a man that he has somehow missed his providential calling—he ought to have been a writer of patent medicine advertisements. In Africa he drinks whisky to save himself from the fatal effects of the climate he is living in, and when at home in England the climate he has just left still affords a sufficient excuse for continuing the custom. He never gets tipsy. I have encountered him often, both at home and abroad, in what I at first took to be a very advanced stage of intoxication, the blind and paralytic stage. But he positively assured me it was not. It was simply the effects of the malarial climate—just a touch of West African fever, and what has always been a mystery to me is the fact that a man of his type suffering from West African fever always looks and acts as if he were drunk. With other men the symptoms are very different.

Cocktail drinking is another insidious form of demoralisation on the coast. At any rate I was led to think so when I first went out. But if the opinions of other men are to be accepted I was decidedly wrong in my supposition. A cocktail is supposed to be a certain specific for creating an appetite. In England a square piece of work or a long walk is generally considered good enough. But in Africa it is different. The climate is different, and that, of course, may account for it. A bad climate, like charity, covers a multitude of sins, and the climate of Western Africa is charged with an unconscionable number of moral offences. Whether it is answerable for them all is another story. But no decent-minded

Christian man, who had the least regard for the recognised customs of civilised society on the West Coast of Africa, would ever dream of sitting down to dinner or luncheon without first partaking of a cocktail.<sup>1</sup> Some men partake of several. But they are old coasters, and their appetites are debilitated—by the climate. They will sit out on their verandahs for an hour before each meal, waiting for visitors, for it is contrary to the rules of society for a man to imbibe a cocktail alone. It would lose half its effects if he could not clink his glass against another and solemnly mutter that expressive but somewhat unintelligible formula “Chin-chin!” So he sits out on his verandah and hails the passers-by. Soon they begin to troop up, some with the avowed intention of partaking of a cocktail, others merely to wish him good morning; but one and all swallow a cocktail before departing. The host takes one with each and several, simply as a token of good-fellowship, or in order to get up his appetite. And both reasons are surely good and commendable, even if they cannot be exactly classed as religious. It is worthy of remark, however, that the men who have never been initiated into the sacred mysteries of cocktail-making and cocktail-taking generally manage to make as good a meal as those who are past masters in the art. But this, I have been assured, is done out of what the Americans call “pure cussedness.” They have no appetite really. They only pretend they have, and what they eat they never properly digest. They ruin their digestive organs for life, and introduce into their systems all manner of dyspeptic complaints in endeavouring to prove that cocktails are not appetisers. But such endeavours are Quixotic. They are absurd. Logic



is on the side of cocktail-takers, and common sense ; at least, they say so, and whatever they say ought to be implicitly believed, for cocktail-takers are never economical of truth. They cannot lie. George



LANDING GIN.

Washington never adhered more strictly to the line of truth than they do, and from their talk one is led to imagine that the proper way to regenerate the moral life of Africa is through the medium of cocktails.

On the coast gin and rum have long been prominent articles of commerce, and are much oftener to be met with than the Bible. "For generations the West Coast negro has been accustomed to see the ocean cast up the rum cask and the demijohn—these have been the shells of his strand. Borne from Bristol, Liverpool, Hamburg, and Holland, they come rolling through the surf out of steamers and sailing vessels."\* At Cape Coast nearly every native house has its keg of rum, and rum enters into all negotiations and every palaver. A trader there once told me that if any conversation takes place between a white man and a native, the upshot of the whole matter is sure to be rum, a present of that commodity being looked upon as a pledge of the business in hand being settled. Further south, in Togoland, gin is the staple article, and some firms at one time were in the habit of paying their labourers with it. The part Mr. Roe played in suppressing that iniquitous system has already been related.

Until quite within recent years, drink was not nearly so prevalent in the interior towns as it is at the present time ; and the natives had to be content with a country decoction, called peto, and palm wine. Of course, a man could get a long way on the road towards intoxication with these if he persevered long enough. Nowadays, thanks to the beneficent influences of commerce and civilisation, the gin and rum trade is becoming the great trade with the interior, and its baneful effects are beginning to tell their tale upon a strong and hardy race. "For hundreds of miles in the interior the square-shouldered gin bottles are as well-known as the beads and brass

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\* *Trafficking in Liquor with the Natives of Africa*, page 6.

wire, which are the usual currency, and along their path sorrow inevitably follows."

"It has been given to us to cover the world with a sea of enlightenment," says Dean Farrar, "and we have girdled it with a zone of drunkenness." The natives themselves are realising what the liquor traffic is rapidly bringing them to, and appealing to be delivered from it, for they feel they are powerless to resist temptation. "They have had to do with Europeans and Europeans. In the hand of one there is the Bible; the other rolls his rum cask on shore; but truth has so far prevailed that the native leaves the merchant to implore the aid of the missionary." The following extract from the letter of a Moham-medan king on the Niger to the late Bishop Crowther—himself an African—speaks for itself: "The matter about which I am writing is not a long matter. It is about *barasá* (gin, or rum). *Barasá, barasá, barasá!* by God! it has ruined our country; it has made them mad. I agree to everything for trade but *barasá*, and beg the English queen to prevent the bringing of *barasá* into this land. For God and the Prophet's sake! for God and the Prophet, His messenger's sake, help us in this matter of *barasá*!"\*

We are sending men and women every year to evangelise the people of Africa. It is good. But what is being done, on the other hand, to curse and ruin them? The following figures, given in an American missionary magazine a few years ago, are appalling enough: "All vessels bound for the west and south-west mission fields, coming from points in Europe and America, touch at Madeira. Here is a list of liquors that passed through in *one week* :

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\* *Trafficking in Liquor with the Natives of Africa*, pp. 11-12.

900,000 cases of gin.  
24,000 butts of rum.  
30,000 cases of brandy.  
28,000 cases of whisky.  
800,000 demijohns of rum.  
36,000 barrels of rum.  
30,000 cases of Old Tom.  
15,000 cases of Absinthe.  
40,000 cases of Vermouth.

the estimated value of which was over one million pounds sterling. Study this table! Foot up the contributions of just one week to the devil's missionary enterprise over against the offerings of the Christian Church of the whole world for a week. How much is this? Less than one-twentieth! Compare this offering to the devil's cause with a week's offering of Christendom, and what is the result? Over one million pounds sterling for the devil, and less than £62,000 for foreign missions!"

The Rev. W. H. Bentley, who was for seven years a missionary on the Congo, stated in 1887 that the annual sale of gin in the factories of the Dutch houses at Mtoma was 50,000 or 60,000 cases. "The demand for spirits in my neighbourhood," he wrote, "is very great; indeed, it is about the only thing the natives seem to care for, and our trade friends laughed at the idea of our Mission being able to travel and work without it. When at Loango, four years ago, spirits were the chief article of barter. The trader with whom I stayed laughed at the idea of my talking to the chiefs about labourers for our Missions after eleven o'clock in the morning. He said that the principal men would be drunk by that hour."



It is not to be wondered at that the earnest spirit of Bryan Roe was stirred within him as he saw the vast devastation that was being caused by strong drink, and that in his closing years he struck at the trade with both hands. The wonder is that he did not strike sooner. He was not content, like many, with merely writing to the newspapers and speaking at public meetings, but, in conjunction with Mr. T. F. Embury, set about organising Temperance Societies and Bands of Hope. The Temperance Committee in England sent him out a small supply of materials, and in the autumn of 1895, after long preparations and many prayers, the first Band of Hope in Lagos was formally inaugurated. A special service was held in the spacious Olowgbo church, and seven or eight hundred people were present. "I felt very proud and happy," said Mr. Roe in a letter home, "as I presided over that meeting to look round and see many of our foremost men and women with us, and evidently in heartfelt sympathy with the movement. Then it was real joy, too, to see the eager, earnest faces of the children as they drank in every word of the speakers, who one and all aimed at making the meeting a gospel-temperance affair."

Short speeches were the order of the day, a bell being rung if a speaker exceeded his limit, and Mr. Roe, Mr. Embury, and Prince Ademuyiwa were among those who held forth. At the close of the meeting the pledge-signing and enrolling of members took place, and it was found that over one hundred young people and teachers had joined the first Band of Hope. Willing workers to carry it on were soon forthcoming, and Prince Ademuyiwa became president and conductor.

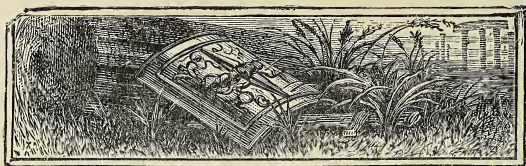
The following week a second society was established in connection with our Faji Church, and the inaugural meeting was attended with all the enthusiasm and success of the previous one at Olowgbo. Since then the work has steadily progressed, and converts to teetotal principles are rapidly being made. At the last District Synod one of the most prominent and successful meetings was the Temperance meeting, and this, without doubt, will become an annual feature in connection with our yearly ecclesiastical gatherings.

Bryan Roe did not enter into this new phase of work with his eyes closed. No one realised more fully than he the greatness of the scheme he had been the means of commencing. He knew that he would not have matters all his own way. He counted on receiving bitter and strenuous opposition, for he was well aware that there were many strong foes of temperance to fight. Some were friends of his, and he knew that his action would cause a breach in their mutual intercourse. But he went forward all the same. There were higher interests to consider than those of earthly friendships, and, true to the trumpet call of duty, the soldier of the Cross went into the battle, resolved rather to lose all than be unfaithful to the dictates of his conscience and the commands of his God. He went into battle determined to win, and the early lessons of his boyhood stood him now, as they had ever done, in good stead. He was not to be daunted by overwhelming odds. He had encountered gigantic evils before, and, in the strength of Him who is God over all, had never been overcome. Neither would he be in this. "The great mercantile houses are against us," he wrote, "for they almost depend upon the sale of liquor. A vast amount of the revenue of the

colony is derived from it. The fortunes of scores have been built up by it. A taste has been cultivated among the natives for it, which will be hard to break. But what of all this? Is the power of God less than in the day when Joshua faced Jericho? It is indeed a giant who has risen to oppose and ruin Christ's Church and people, and hinder the progress of the Redeemer's kingdom. The time has come for us, the soldiers of Christ, to arise and put our armour on. We must and will fight this battle now, and, firm in the confidence that God is for us, we feel sure of victory. Pray for us!"

Bishop Tugwell and other members of the Church Missionary Society joined heartily in the crusade, and at a great public meeting held in the Glover Memorial Hall, the drink traffic in Africa was unanimously condemned by all sections of the Christian community. One of the results of this agitation has been the raising of the duty on spirits imported into Western Africa, and Bishop Tugwell, who is now in England, is strongly advocating prohibition. The Christian conscience has at last been awakened to the terrible nature of the liquor traffic on the West coast, and just as the slave trade was abolished through the untiring efforts of earnest and godly men, so we look forward with confidence to the time when the demoralisation of the natives of Africa by strong drink will be but a shuddering memory of the past.





## CHAPTER XX.

SECOND JOURNEY THROUGH YORUBA — IBADAN  
CUSTOM — THE KING OF THE NIGHT — AN  
AFRICAN BILL SYKES.

EARLY in 1895, the writer, who for nearly four years had been superintendent of the Yoruba interior mission, was invalided home, and the Rev. William Hoad was sent out to take charge. Mr. Roe determined to take him up to his station, as rather disturbing events had occurred since my departure. An eight days' journey through forests and jungle is no easy undertaking, and the Chairman was by no means in the best of health when the party set out. His young wife bravely decided to share the difficulties and dangers of the route with her husband, and doubtless now, in the midst of her bereavement, her sorrow is tempered somewhat by the thought that all that wifely devotion and affection could do was done during this final and, as it proved, fatal journey.

Much preparation was necessary for such an expedition, for furniture, clothing, books, provisions, pots, pans, and a hundred and one other articles had to be made up into loads of about eighty pounds



each, and carriers found for them. The finding of carriers, however, for long interior journeys is generally left in the capable hands of a swarthy individual, who rejoices in the noble Saxon name of Alfred. Alfred is probably the most all-round man Africa has yet produced. What he doesn't know of country customs and requirements isn't worth knowing. He apparently knows everything, and seems able to do almost everything. And what Alfred cannot do, his brothers generally can.

Whenever he fails in performing a piece of work, which is very seldom, his brothers, as a rule, take it up and carry it through. Alfred's brothers always reminded me of the algebraic  $x$ —they were an unknown quantity. There seemed no limit to their number. They occupied every position in society, and followed every known profession and trade. If it was a canoe that one wanted to take him up the lagoon, Alfred would send for his brother to act the part of canoeman. He had spent his boyhood on the water, and was acquainted with every hidden creek and sunken rock. If it was a pair of new boots that was required, one of Alfred's brothers would make them. He had served his time to the business. If it was a carpenter that was wanted, Alfred's brother would assuredly be the first man to present himself. He had given seven years of a long and useful life to that trade. Perhaps it was a tailor the missionary needed. Edward Andrew George, Alfred's brother, would apply for the work; the maker of drill suits to his excellency the Governor, and all the members of the Legislative Council.

Alfred's brothers were cooks in commercial houses, bakers at the confectioners', caretakers of banks,

carriers of gin cases, sailors in the navy, and soldiers in the constabulary force. He had a brother on every vessel that came into port, and was constantly asking for a day off to attend some fraternal funeral. His brothers seemed to be the foundation and pillars of Lagos' society, doctors in every hospital, salesmen in every store, deacons in every church. The ramifications of this remarkable family covered an enormous area, and its members were to be found on the wharves unloading ships, at the market selling stores, in the post-office sorting letters, and at the custom house passing entries. Without them I know not what would have become of Wesleyan missionaries on the coast during the last decade.

When carriers were wanted for this Yoruba journey, Alfred soon assembled a motley army of his brothers, and allowed Mr. Roe to pick and choose the likeliest. The selected ones he then took into his own care and keeping, for the average common or garden carrier requires some attention and management. If twenty or thirty are engaged, they are ready and eager to be off with their loads days before the advertised time of starting arrives ; but when the actual moment comes "they all, with one consent, begin to make excuses." One wants to cook "chop" ; another to make sacrifice to Shango ; a third to hold a big palaver with a neighbour concerning the suspicious circumstances attending the disappearance of a pig ; a fourth, with tears in his eyes, will start the story that he wants to bury his mother ; while quite a number suddenly discover that they are suffering from some deadly disease, and declare "they are no fit to tote load." What a man requires in dealing with Lagos carriers is patience—unlimited patience, though

a loud voice and a threatening aspect are things not to be lightly despised. Alfred fortunately possessed all these, and was generally successful in supplying the missionaries' needs.

Mr. Roe's party was ready to start early in



THE CARRIERS' GOD.

November, but at the last moment the inevitable delay occurred. The band of brothers on this occasion struck for higher wages, and were summarily dismissed; but as a fresh batch of brothers soon appeared in their places, the journey was commenced. The party consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Roe, Mr. Hoad, and Mr. T. F. Embury, of the Hussey Technical School,

a great friend of the Roes. He shall tell the story of their travels in his own words: "Four immense canoes had been engaged, and at half-past two in the afternoon of November 12th, 1895, we embarked in them and sounded the whistle for starting. The night was spent upon the water, and at six the next morning we landed at Itoike, a small village some distance up one of the many creeks with which the lagoon abounded. The scene was one familiar to all African travellers, boxes, trunks, bedding, and other things mixed up in wild and seemingly hopeless confusion; and the carriers glaring and growling at one another in view of selecting the lightest load. After a hastily prepared and eaten breakfast we are ready to begin again, and the carriers rubbing their feet with porcelain rings—to harden them, they said—hoisted the loads on their heads, formed into line, and we were off. Our route lay through an immense forest, and was evidently a dried-up waterway, flanked on both sides with thick brushwood and trees, some of the latter towering to a great height. The branches and creepers formed quite a canopy, affording a pleasant shelter from the sun, and, in places, almost shutting out our view of the sky. Butterflies with wings of varied hues flitted to and fro. Wild flowers that might have made the heart of a botanist thrill with delight grew in great abundance, the air teemed with insects, and the earth swarmed with ants and other creeping things.

"Mr. Roe seemed in an exceedingly happy frame of mind, and sang to us, as we jogged slowly along, snatches of Methodist hymns, dropping now and again into poetry, and favouring us with some choice extracts from the poets. Our party became more and





FOREST BETWEEN IJEBU AND IBADAN.

more straggling as time went on, and when we came to cross-roads the guide indicated the route to those behind by laying bunches of grass across all the paths save the one taken.

"The first night was spent in the town of Jebu Ode, and the second at Mamu, where, metaphorically speaking, we pitched our tents. Literally, we set up our camp-beds, for Mamu is neither town, village, nor hamlet, but merely a great clearing in the heart of the forest. It was just dusk when we arrived, and soon the black shades of a starless night settled down upon us, the darkness, however, being partially dispelled by the flickering light of numerous little camp fires, around which were gathered our carriers, some engaged in cooking food, and others rolled up in their blankets preparing for sleep.

"The forest still befriended us the next day, and after two hours' hard travelling we reached our first stopping place, where a band of natives, on their way to Lagos, were on the point of starting. They were squatted on the ground in a circle, silently and solemnly smoking an immense pipe, one long pull being sufficient for each man, who then gravely passed it on to his nearest neighbour. While we were at breakfast one of our carriers turned up, dripping from head to foot in what we at first imagined to be perspiration, but which, on investigation, proved to be kerosene oil, the tin he was carrying having sprung a leak *en route*. He was in a state of sad distress, not knowing what was the matter with him, and groaning most dismally, he said, 'Oh, masters, I am very, very sick.'

"Towards evening the leafy roofs of the houses of Ibadan hove in sight, and pushing rapidly on we soon

gained the welcome shelter of the Wesleyan Mission House, where our native minister, the Rev. S. P. Johnson, made us most comfortable."

Ibadan is an immense city, with a population estimated at 250,000, and Methodism is represented there by one native minister, and a mud-walled, leaf-covered church, barely seating a hundred people.

Until quite recently slavery was carried on in the place to its fullest extent, even free-born people being daringly kidnapped at times, carried away, and sold, and it was counted unsafe for a person to go out alone at night-time for this reason. As for a stranger, he was a doomed man the moment he entered the town, for he could not purchase anything without discovering himself. He was at once severely questioned, and if unable to give a satisfactory account of himself, was seized by the lucky individual who first met him, and sold at the nearest market. Of course this was not the case with well-known traders passing to and fro, for they were safe enough, and now that Jebu Ode is British territory the slave business is almost a dead letter, as the Ijebus were the Ibadans' best customers.

The people are mostly heathen, but religious toleration exists, in name at any rate, and there are many Mohammedans, and not a few Christians belonging to the Wesleyan and Church Missionary Societies. The houses are all built of mud, with thatched roofs, and having quadrangles or compounds inside the walls. In every street fetish houses abound—small, round structures, with cone-shaped roofs, some of them capable of holding a couple of people, and in these the devotees sometimes sit and solemnly meditate. Others are much smaller, and have little



wooden images in front, which are generally plentifully decorated with the blood of fowls offered in sacrifice ; while inside the house there is usually to be found a small pot of water and a few kola-nuts, offerings to the god. Devil houses are seldom, if ever, built within the compound walls. The people are shrewd enough to prefer Satan's room to his



DEVIL HOUSE.

company, and whenever a man erects a dwelling he builds the fetish house outside in the hope that his Satanic majesty will take up his residence there, and not interfere with the occupants within the compound walls.

Markets abound on every side, and here the vendors seem to possess everything but what the



buyer most requires. Generally these markets are situated in spots pleasantly shaded by leafy trees, under which scores of lazy men lie blinking at the branches in a state of dreamy content. There is always a loud and continuous noise to contend with, arising partly from the barterings and hagglings over various petty wares, and partly from the sound of the "dumby" sticks, as they descend with a dull thud upon the boiled yams lying in little wooden tubs. Carriers are constantly arriving and depositing their loads on the ground, and then suddenly and mysteriously disappearing. They seem to be absorbed by the traders, and, indeed, at first sight, the whole crowd assembled might be taken for sellers. Of buyers there seemed to be none. Walking through the jostling throng, however, the mystery is soon cleared up. African sellers and buyers part not with their goods and money readily. They have an inherent love for bartering, and the one asks first what she never expects to get, and the other offers what he knows will never be accepted. Then the seller casts her eye around in search of a neighbour disengaged; and calls that one to her assistance. The buyer, not to be outdone in the matter of numbers, brings up a friend to support him. Others are called in on both sides to praise and depreciate the quality of the goods, and they all sit down to hold "palaver" until a fair and reasonable price is arrived at.

Marriage laws in Ibadan have some curious features about them. A man may have as many wives as he can afford to purchase, and on his death his heir annexes not only his property, but the ladies of the harem, whether they like it or

not. When an interior native is enamoured with the charms of a damsel, he wastes no time humbugging to gain *her* consent. He starts off to her father, asks the price of the maiden in much the same way as he would ask the price of a piece of cloth or a puncheon of rum, tries to beat it down a pound or two by pointing out that the lady has lost a couple of front teeth and that she is not so young as she once was, and then hands over the price agreed upon. And the handing over of this "head-money," as it is called, practically constitutes the marriage ceremony, though there are other customs, mostly of a festive nature, connected therewith.

Laws in Ibadan are passed by a council of chiefs, all questions being decided by a bare majority, subject to a veto vested in the head chief. The laws are then promulgated by the criers, and the enforcement of them is left to the chiefs in their respective quarters. Cases involving capital punishment are heard by the head chief in council, and he alone can pass the death sentence. When a criminal is thus condemned he is handed over to the Ogbonis, and executed by them in their house. The unfortunate one's head is then nailed to a tree in some market-place, and the body thrown into a deep pit prepared for the purpose.

Theft is not usually a capital offence, but when it becomes exceptionally prevalent, an example is made by executing a thief on the stool of the god Ogun in the public market, the criminal's head being struck off by the sword-bearer of the Ogboni. Minor cases are heard and disposed of by each chief in his own quarter, but heavy fines and fettered imprisonment

can only be inflicted by the head over all. There are no police, the apprehension of offenders being left to the public at large, and when thieves are known to have entered the town—and it is surprising how quickly their presence is discovered—the criers go round warning the people to look after their belongings, and shut up their houses safely at night. In the case of one individual, to whom I once had the honour to be introduced in Ibadan, all these precautions were unavailing. He was popularly known to fame as the king of the night, or the burglar chief, and was generally supposed to be able to rob with impunity, as he possessed charms which prevented him being discovered. These charms, however, on one occasion seemed to be somewhat out of working order, for he was found in the dead of night in the very act of transacting business in a certain chief's compound, and promptly apprehended. There was nothing in the man's appearance to indicate that he followed the highly lucrative profession of housebreaking. He was not of the type usually associated with the disciples of Mr. William Sykes, but, on the contrary, was a mild-mannered, benevolent-looking old gentleman, with a sedate smile and a voice that resembled the tone of a penny tin-trumpet. His professional costume was so scanty that it is hardly worth while to mention it, and the only tools he apparently employed were a cheap lot of charms and gri-gris. The various uses of these articles were explained to me by an obliging individual, who appeared to know more about them than was consistent with a man of honourable professions. An immense iron bracelet, for instance, when placed near the door of a house, caused the inhabitants thereof to fall into a profound state of

stupor. A tin box, containing powder, blinded the eyes of all who gazed upon it. A little leather pouch paralysed the limbs of anyone touching its owner, and a string of aggri beads played mischievous pranks with doors, gates, or inconveniently high walls. If Joshua had only possessed those beads there would have been no necessity for encompassing the walls of Jericho so many times. One touch, and lo! the walls would have been levelled to the ground!

How the beads came into this amiable burglar's possession I am at a loss to know, for usually they are only to be met with on the Gold Coast, where they are dug up out of the ground, a thin, blue-coloured mist, it is commonly asserted, arising from the spot where they lie buried. If tradition be true, the finder of them is an exceedingly fortunate individual, for, after his discovery, he is sure to be in luck for some time to come. His cards will all be trumps, and he will emerge successfully from matters relating to love, business, or war. Crush a bead into powder and sprinkle a child with it, and that child will have a future before it of unbounded prosperity. The beads will also tell you whether a man is speaking the truth or not, if you can persuade him to drink one from out a bowl of water, for if he has spoken falsely the bead will be the means of his sudden death. Wonderful, indeed, is the power of the aggri bead.







## CHAPTER XXI.

### OYO AND ITS INDUSTRIES—SOME REMARKS ABOUT AGIDDY.

THE missionary party under charge of Mr. Roe stayed in Ibadan over the Sunday, and conducted services both in the chapel and outside in several market-places. A service in a market-place is always an interesting episode. Taking a stand on some slight elevation a hymn is given out, and the mission band is soon the centre of a large and motley mob. The Mohammedan, in his clean white robes and flowing turban ; the carrier, perhaps from some distant town, in his dirty cloth and cap ; the trader, with her load of agiddy neatly balanced on her head ; the housewife, with her calabash of cowries ; children clothed and children naked ; idlers, loafers, rogues, and vagabonds ; all are represented in the congregation, and all appear highly delighted with the proceedings.

On this Sunday afternoon a big and somewhat noisy crowd assembled to hear the "white man's palaver," and two half-drunken men, forcing their way roughly through the throng, took up a position by the missionaries' side. It was evident that they were deeply impressed with a sense of their own importance,

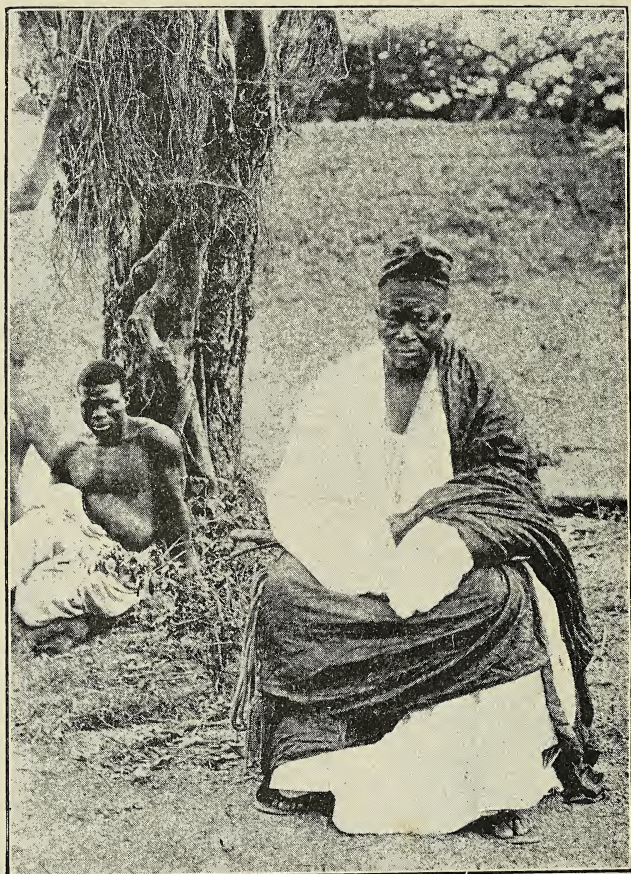
and, constituting themselves the Christians' champions, they did something in the way of keeping order by flogging sundry children with their canes, and bestowing ferocious looks and bloodthirsty threats upon adult offenders. They were good listeners, too, with that dignified gravity for which men in their hilarious condition are famous, and wagged their heads in solemn approval at what was being said, giving their sanction and blessing to it by declaring, "Bairnie, bairnie; it is so, it is so!" Preaching thus in the open-air seems very much like sowing seed by the wayside, where the fowls of the air devour it before it has time to sprout, but only God can tell how far-reaching the influence of such preaching may be. The Gospel is declared faithfully, the seed is sown diligently, but when once it is cast into the ground it is out of the sower's keeping. Influences that he can neither originate nor control must do their work. Curiosity and impatience may both alike grow weary, but the wise teacher that is content with the knowledge that is his own, will work cheerfully and hopefully on, and be found laden with sheaves at the last.

"Monday," says Mr. Embury, in his journal of the journey, "saw us early on the move. We left the Mission House shortly after six o'clock, and an hour later passed through the gates of the city into the open country beyond. Soon we were threading our way through fields of golden maize and purple guineacorn, some of the stalks of which towered fourteen feet high. *En route* we passed Captain Mugglestone returning from Oyo with a detachment of soldiers, having been there to quell a serious disturbance that had broken out. Fiditi was reached at half-past five,

and here we met with a gratifying reception. Many of the Church members and school-children from Oyo had marched out to meet and give us a downright good welcome. We stayed the night in the village, sleeping in the piazza of the headman's compound, and I shall ever remember Fiditi as the most evil-smelling and dirtiest place it has been my lot to become acquainted with. We were glad enough to get away from it next morning, and daylight had no sooner dawned than we fervently bade it good-bye. We had a short rest at a small hamlet a few miles from Oyo, and as a crowd of curious natives surrounded us, Mr. Roe spoke to them of God's love. This had been characteristic of the Chairman throughout the whole journey, sowing the good seed of the Kingdom whenever an opportunity occurred.

"We entered Oyo amid great demonstrations of joy on the part of the Christians, who had so recently passed through troublesome times. Just a week before our arrival the town had been thrown into a state of intense excitement. Urged on by his chiefs, the Alafin (king) had committed deeds which brought down the hand of the British commissioner, Captain Bower, somewhat heavily. At first the captain was content to send a stern remonstrance, but that having failed to accomplish his purpose, he took up a detachment of Houssa soldiers to hold a 'palaver,' and while parleying with the king a most deliberate attempt was made upon his life. Much trouble ensued, and in the end the royal quarters were burnt down, and a heavy fine inflicted upon the king and principal chiefs. The punishment meted out, though seemingly severe, was quite justifiable in view of the atrocious offences committed, and the common people rather





THE ALAFIN, OR YORUBA KING.



rejoiced at seeing the power of the king rudely shaken, small white flags floating from their compound walls indicating their friendship with the white men.

"The Rev. S. G. and Mrs. Pinnock, of the American Baptist Society, received us most hospitably, and made us their guests for the next few days while Mr. Hoad's house was being put in order. On the verandah of Mr. Pinnock's house there was a huge heap of iron fetters, which had but lately shackled the feet of many slaves. Captain Bower had given orders for the chains to be struck off, and for three days a blacksmith had been busily employed in setting the captives free. The Houssa camp was stretched before us on a great plain in front of the house, and two innocent-looking Maxim guns and a seven-pounder pointed their death-dealing jaws in the direction of the town, ready for action at a moment's notice should further disturbance arise.

"Our first business was to introduce Mr. Hoad to the Alafin, and a more dejected and crestfallen looking monarch I have never seen. Nevertheless, he received us very courteously, and listened attentively to Mr. Roe's earnest exhortation to turn from cruel idolatry and serve the living God. We were received in state, the king being seated on a small wooden throne and dressed in coloured satin robes, with a cone-shaped bead covering on his head. In his hand he held a sceptre with a white horse-tail at the end of it. The inevitable red umbrella was held over his sacred head by one slave, while another kept waving a cloth in front of him to keep him cool and ward off mosquitoes. What struck us most was the poverty-stricken appearance of the chiefs, compared with the gorgeous dress of his majesty; but this was explained

by the fact that no chief, no matter how high his rank may be, is permitted at court with anything but country costume. Away from court, however, the nobles come forth in garments gay and costly."

The Oyos, like most people who live in capitals, are more refined in their manners and mode of speech than the Yorubas in general. They are very poor as compared with the Ibadans, for they are taxed heavily by the king, and yet they consider themselves superior to their less-favoured countrymen who are not residents within the royal city.

The Alafin is supreme judge in all important cases, and he alone can pass the death sentence. It was formerly the custom of the king's eldest son (Aremo) to reign with his father, at whose decease he was supposed "to go to sleep," *i.e.* to kill himself; the Yorubas having a proverb that a man cannot serve both father and son, and the successor to the throne is generally the nephew of the king. Now, however, the Aremo is merely banished from the country on the death of his father.

Human sacrifices do not appear to be practised by the Oyos now, though there is still a proverb current that "when the king dies, the ground spoils"; or, in plain English, there are many burials, and there is little doubt that the principal wives and slaves of an Alafin mysteriously disappear when he dies. It is broadly hinted that they kill themselves, but likely enough they are kindly assisted in this.

Not far from the king's palace there stands a building that might almost be called a convent, being occupied solely by women, and no man is permitted to enter, the penalty for so doing being death. These women have charge of the dead Alafins, whose bodies

are supposed to be buried in the building, and their duties consist of keeping clean the rooms and preparing "chop" (food) for the deceased majesties. It might be imagined that they would be well paid for their solemn services, but such is not the case, and they earn a precarious living by growing and selling onions.



KOFOWORALA, THE HEIR APPARENT OF OYO.

In some places the dead are supposed to be living in the shape of ethereal souls, moving among their relatives and keeping them company, and from this idea, no doubt, the custom of turning their houses and compounds into cemeteries had its rise. It is supposed that these disembodied spirits are still in want of food and drink; hence, when the family sit down



to a meal a portion of food is set apart for their use, and a quantity of palm wine poured on the ground for their delectation. Again, if a man dies in pawn, his body is placed on a bamboo platform erected outside the city walls, and his relatives will often pay off the mortgage and bury the body, without which the soul of the departed cannot find rest. Thus they do for the dead what they refuse to the living, though that fault pertains not to the Yorubas only.

Some four days' journey from Oyo there is a small village, of which it may be said, if popular tradition be true, that it is inhabited solely by the dead. There is an annual custom in the royal city of sending a man and woman into the bush as scape-goats for the nation. They are supposed to be taken by the gods, but as a matter of fact they generally make their way to this village, where they live unmolested, though never again are they allowed to leave it, on pain of death; and there they remain, dead to the world, to all intents and purposes.

Oyo itself is not much more than sixty years old, having been founded in 1834 by Atiba, a relative of the present Alafin. The ancient capital of the Yoruba country, in its palmy days, was situate near the river Niger, and was destroyed by the all-conquering Fellatahs when they overran that part of the country. The present town is built on an eminence, and covers a vast area, the population being estimated at 100,000. The streets, if such they may be called, are narrow and uneven, though kept remarkably clean for a native town. It goes without saying that markets are numerous, the principal one being the king's, which is well supplied with merchandise from all parts of the world. The people are both industrious and



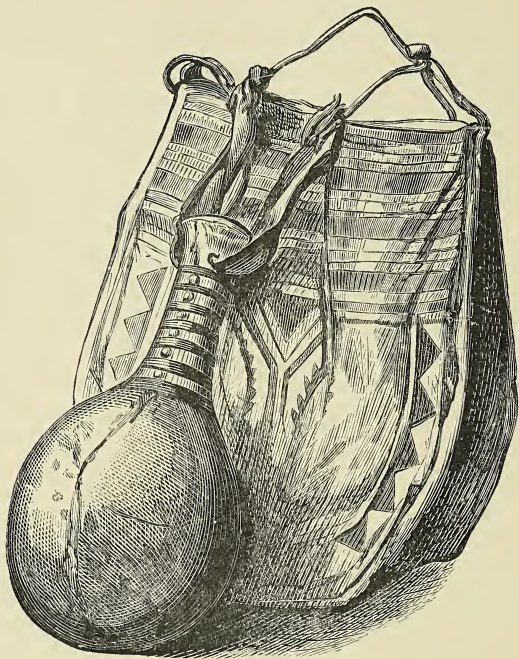
frugal, the most important pursuit being agriculture; yams, maize, cotton, sweet potatoes, tobacco, and guinea corn being grown in great quantities. Outside the city walls you might wander through many miles of well-cultivated land, though ploughs, harrows, and other labour-lessening implements are unknown to the Yoruba farmer, who contents himself with articles of a very primitive character. With a cutlass he fells trees, with a large knife he clears away the bush, and with a short-handled hoe he digs up the ground. He can generally rely on two harvests every twelve months, and the produce is brought from field to market in baskets by his slaves and wives.

Iron ore is found in some parts, and from this a fairly good quality of pig iron is obtained. The pigs are sold to the blacksmith, who, with only a few rude tools, manufactures axes, cutlasses, hoes, swords, knives, razors, scissors, chains, staples, fetish-rings, and other articles.

Calabashes are grown in great quantities, and are made into all sorts of household utensils, serving the purpose of cups, saucers, plates, wash-bowls, etc. Some of them are carved in a most beautiful fashion, and others are covered with fantastic shapes of animals, birds, and fishes, as yet unknown to natural history. But this is not to be wondered at when one remembers that the only tool the carver employs is a sharp-pointed native knife.

The manufacture of cloth finds employment for quite a number of people, and among other industries may be mentioned the making of iron and earthenware pots for cooking purposes; the dyeing of cloth; the dressing of leather and turning it into slippers,

purses, and saddles ; the extracting of oil from the palm nut ; the manufacture of a curious black compound intended for soap ; the making of beautiful beads ; and the grinding of snuff.



WATER BOTTLE AND POUCH.

Then, of course, there are the traders, many of them women and young girls, who are to be found in shoals in the market-places, sitting patiently by their bale of goods and bawling out the excellency of the articles they are selling. Like vendors of goods in

England, each woman, according to her own confession, sells by far the best wares, and this fact she vociferates to the passers-by at the top of her by no means melodious voice. Occasionally she relaxes her efforts in this direction, and bestows her attention on something else, to wit, the chastisement of her squalling children, who roll about at her feet gorgeously attired in a string of native beads worn round the neck.

Scattered round the town, generally under the shade of some spreading tree, are open-air restaurants, *sans* chairs, *sans* tables, *sans* knives and forks, *sans* plates and dishes, *sans* everything associated with comfort to the European mind. Here can be bought, for a trifling sum, hot and cold agiddy, dumby and okra soup, fruit, and other dainty viands to satisfy the cravings of the inner man. Yams and agiddy are the staple articles of diet, though the latter, which is made from Indian corn, is not at all palatable to the white man. The taste is something too fearful to state in cold print, the sensations produced being somewhat similar to those of a man who eats tomatoes for the first time; and it is such dainty, delicate-looking stuff, that the average Englishman thinks he has come across a toothsome article, and takes a big bite. The horror that spreads over his countenance a second later cannot be described in words. Neither can his feelings; but if ever a man is in a fit state of mind for treason, felony, murder, and other awful crimes, it surely is when he takes his first and, as a rule, final bite of agiddy. I have been told that the taste for it is an acquired one. I can quite believe it. Certainly it is not a natural one, and a man without a palate might, in the course of a

thousand years, come to eat it without any evil feelings being stirred within his breast. But men possessed of all their faculties would find a thousand years far too short a period to acquire even a respect for the blancmange-looking agiddy, much less a liking for it







## CHAPTER XXII.

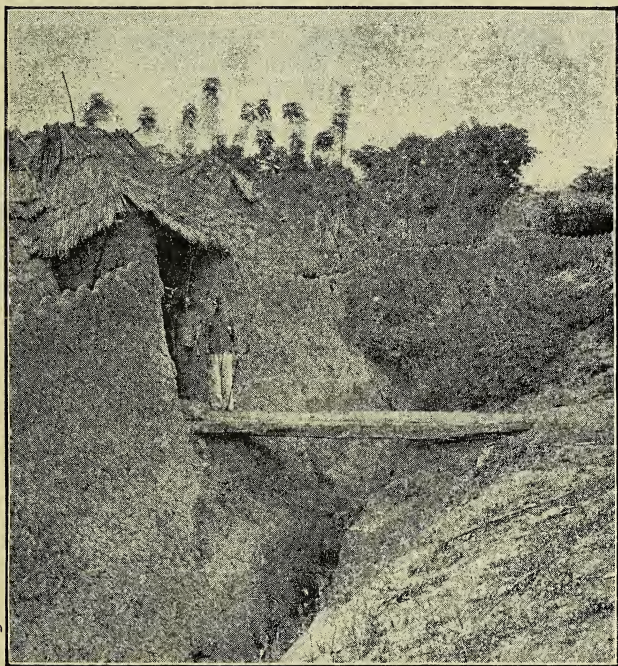
A NOVEL VOYAGE—ISEYIN—ERUWA—BURYING A  
FATHER—AFTER TEN YEARS.

“ON Saturday morning, November 23rd,” continues Mr. Embury, “our homeward journey was commenced, the route being different to the outward one. On reaching the banks of the river Awon, we looked for a bridge or canoe whereby to cross over, but we looked in vain ; neither was to be seen. How to reach the other side seemed to be an impenetrable mystery, until one of the carriers pointed to some calabashes lying on the bank, and said we should have to cross on those. The prospect was not inviting, but we sent for the chief of the neighbouring village, desiring him to come with his men and ferry us over. We were told that he would come in a minute, and sat down patiently to wait, for we knew from experience what an African minute means. Generally it means an hour, sometimes two. On this occasion it proved to be an hour and a half, and the chief was full of apologies for the delay. We sternly cut short his long string of regrets, and divesting ourselves of all articles of apparel that stood in danger of getting wet, we prepared for our novel voyage. Mr. Roe was the

first to make the venture, and even his adventurous spirit seemed to curl up within him as he gingerly took his seat upon the calabash. There was none of the dignity of a chairman of a district apparent in his demeanour as he crossed over, holding his legs well up out of the water, and clinging affectionately to the neck of the grinning native who swam and pushed behind. But dignity was a secondary consideration in this our hour of need. Great care was necessary, lest the strange craft should suddenly shoot up from beneath and roll us gently into the flowing tide, but, fortunately, we crossed over with no other mishap than a good wetting. The carriers were not so highly favoured as we had been. Their loads were put on top of the calabash, the swimmer slung his arms round one side, and the carrier, with wildly staring eye, clutched them in a deathlike grip. Then away they went, bobbing up and down in a most comical manner, now almost submerged, and then coming up again, puffing, blowing, and squirting streams of water into each other's faces. Our horses swam the river gallantly, and a few hours later saw us safely over the Ogun, and within the walls of Iseyin, another Yoruba town of great natural beauty. It is built in a deep valley, shut in on every hand by high hills, so that no matter which way you look great slopes present themselves to your view, bringing very forcibly to your mind the words of the Psalmist respecting the mountains round about Jerusalem.

"The next day, Sunday, we paid our respects to the king, who was pleased to receive us right royally on his huge verandah, which was supported by wooden pillars, wonderfully carved, so that the not too well favoured faces of innumerable gods stared at

us from every direction. Half a dozen ugly images stood up against the wall, and the roof was fairly groaning beneath the heavy weight of many gruesome charms and fetishes.



ISEYIN, OYO GATE.

“The king was a stately looking man, well on in years, and was beautifully attired in a crimson gown, and a red hat covered with small squares of thin silver and brass. Mr. Roe spoke of the claims of the King of kings, and exhorted the stately old



man to render Him his service. Almost immediately afterwards the Chairman preached at the Mission-house, and again in the evening he conducted another service in the king's palace, taking for his text, Matt. xi. 28, 'Come unto Me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' The discourse was exceptionally suitable to the king and his array of dignified chiefs, inasmuch as they were all in a state of great excitement and unrest from the events which had occurred in Oyo. Our duties, even then, were not ended for the day.

"'In for a penny, in for a pound,' remarked the Chairman cheerfully, and away he led us to the market-place, where, standing by the stone of execution, which was covered with stains of blood, perhaps of recent victims, we held a large and enthusiastic open-air service. Near at hand, and facing us while we spoke, was an immense tree; on which was displayed, to their best possible advantage, the grinning skulls of several criminals, executed not many days before; and inspired by the sight, the burden of our cry was: 'It is appointed unto man once to die.'

"The next day we resumed our onward march, and found it to be exceptionally wearisome. There was absolutely no shade, and the heat was terrific. Fortunately we had not far to travel, Esi Ado, our stopping place, being only six hours from Iseyin. The night was most oppressive, and sleep seemed out of the question, for a great army of goats and pigs bleated and grunted the livelong time. We, therefore, decided to make a very early start next morning, and at three o'clock sallied forth from the gate with the hope beating in our hearts of reaching Eruwa by noon. The moon was shining brightly, and truly we



needed all the light she could afford, for the road was as difficult to travel along as the one which is said to be paved with good intentions. What troubled our carriers much more was the fact that there were no villages to pass through, and our meals in consequence were very plain and paltry affairs. It was sadly evident, however, that at one time there had been fairly large and flourishing towns in the neighbourhood, for we were constantly coming across the grass-covered ruins of such. They were a mournful sight, betokening as they did bloodshed, cruelty, wrong, and oppression. It was the same tale everywhere, Dahomian raids, and it is no wonder that the chiefs of Esi Ado and Eruwa, a few years ago, thanked God when they heard of the success of the French arms against the bloodthirsty despot of Abomay.

“After refreshing ourselves at a small hamlet, happily discovered a few miles from our destination, we pressed on, and soon found ourselves inside Eruwa, a veritable city among stones, perched like an eagle’s eyrie among almost inaccessible crags. To reach it we had to climb over bare sides of rock, and to thread our way through zig-zag passages between huge monoliths. Mr. Halligey visited Eruwa in 1887, and in one of his West African lectures relates a touching interview with the king. He had asked permission to establish a mission station, and the king replied: ‘In my younger days I hated the white men. Our fathers told us that they caught black men and ground up their blood with their bones to make cloth!’ ‘A strange expression,’ says Mr. Halligey; but it had a profound meaning. It was an echo of the hopeless wail of myriads of outraged negroes, who, in bygone

days, were stolen from their homes, and borne far over the sea, to toil and die in the cotton plantations of the West.

"Permission was granted Mr. Halligey to begin Christian work in the place, but it has never prospered as in other parts. Our church is not an imposing edifice, and when it is remembered that the total cost of building did not exceed thirty-five shillings, the reason for this will be plainly manifest. One cannot expect a cathedral for the price of a Waterbury watch.

"We made the chapel our headquarters, and when the king and his counsellors visited us next morning, Mr. Roe faithfully expounded to them the main outlines of the Christian faith. It was an affecting service, and though packed like sardines in a tin, our hearers listened attentively to what Mr. Roe was saying, and seemed to be filled with a longing for the life he pictured to them."

It was at Eruwa that the writer first witnessed a native funeral. Here, as elsewhere in the Yoruba country, the people honour with some ceremony the extremes of human existence—birth and death. A man is welcomed into the world and ushered out of it with feasting, drinking, dancing, and firing; and the descendants of the dead will often impoverish themselves to inter a venerable parent with some show of pomp. On my arrival at Eruwa some years ago, I learnt that the head of the house in which I put up was just dead, and resolved to unite with his relations in the last rites to his memory. The body was wrapped in calico sheets and country mats, and laid out in a room, where it was constantly watched by three ancient crones, widows of the deceased. A few days were devoted to a series of moanings and

groanings by professional weeping women and tom-tom men, and then notices were sent out to friends summoning them to the final ceremony.

At the appointed time the body was brought forth by six carriers, and a procession formed, the man's wives, about twenty in number—almost entirely denuded, their heads shaven, and their bodies besprinkled with dust—leading the way. Most of them appeared covered with self-inflicted bruises, burns, and gashes, which were intended to indicate present sorrow and future uselessness. The body was carried on a new mat, and all the charms, fetishes, and flummery that had belonged to it in life were laid by its side. The procession moved slowly along through the crowded streets, singing the praises of the defunct in chorus, while one of the sons remained at home to receive the condolences of friends, who, in most instances, deposit a humble tribute of agiddy, palm wine, okra soup, beer, and other luxuries to help out the subsequent merry-making. I put in my quota towards this entertainment, and the weeping women showed their appreciation by a loud, ear-splitting wail, and lifting me tenderly up in their brawny arms. When the procession returned, fowls were slaughtered and their blood offered in calabashes to the dead. As soon as this sanguinary ceremony was concluded the body was buried and the festivities began. The widows re-appeared clad in white array, their shaven skulls anointed, and their arms and ankles loaded with every bead and bracelet they could muster. They were now the property of the eldest son, who chose a few of the choicest for himself and generously distributed the others among his brothers and kinsmen, courteously offering me the pick of the selected ones

in return for my donation ; but as I was in no hurry to form an alliance with his family, I declined the honour as too utterly overwhelming.

"We had no time to spend in Eruwa," says Mr. Embury, "and next morning were off betimes, travelling nine hours with only one break. Crossing the Ogun at five p.m., we sat down to our evening's meal tired and thirsty, and refreshed our jaded frames with deep draughts of 'grateful and comforting' cocoa. Before we got to bed, one of our carriers came to us saying that he had found a young native woman in one of the sheds, weeping bitterly on account of having been detained by the men of the village. It transpired that she was on her way from Abeokuta to join her husband in Eruwa, but having no money to pay for her passage over the river, the villagers had refused to allow her to pass on. Mr. Roe, tired as he was, was not too tired to interest himself on the woman's behalf, and he succeeded in frightening the men into a more generous frame of mind, so that in the morning she was allowed to depart in peace ; and, we afterwards learnt, arrived at her destination in safety.

"Abeokuta was reached at eleven o'clock this morning, and our stay here extended over four days, the Chairman finding much work to do in visiting the various societies, renewing tickets, holding ministers' and agents' meetings, exhorting them to continue steadfast in their faith and work. Of course we found time to visit the famous Oluma rock, and ascended it in spite of the frenzied warnings of an aged prophet, who assured us that we would certainly die ere the year was out. Before Abeokuta was built, this huge pile of granite was sought as a refuge when the Egba villages were destroyed by the ravages of war. A



great chief, named Shodeke, persuaded the refugees to build a town around this rock, hence the name Abeokuta, *i.e.*, 'under the stone.'

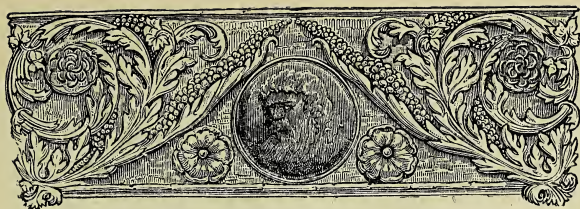
"We had the pleasure of meeting here the Rev. J. B. Wood, whose missionary career has been a remarkable one. He has spent nearly forty years on the West Coast of Africa, and still preaches the Gospel to the people he has learnt to love so well. His grammar of the Yoruba language is the acknowledged standard work, and from it both natives and Europeans are taught.

"On Thursday, December 3rd, we left Abeokuta, and crossing the Ogun for the last time, came to Yaba two days later, where only a few weeks before Mr. and Mrs. Roe had laid the foundation stones of a new Wesleyan church." It was not inappropriate that the penultimate stage of Bryan Roe's last missionary journey should be Yaba. It was one of the stations he had visited when on his first tour in the days of his early ministry, and there he had experienced the joy of leading men from darkness to light. Wonderfully had God wrought in the few short years that had elapsed between that first memorable journey as a young and earnest recruit, and this last one as the grave and zealous Chairman of the District, weighed down with all the cares and responsibilities of his important office, and one can imagine with what joy and thanksgiving he would look upon those who had been among the first-fruits of the harvest that God had made him the instrument of reaping. The striking feature, however, was that the same enthusiasm and zeal for Africa's welfare found in the young man of 1885 was still burning in the heart of the middle-aged man of 1895.

The fire had never died out. No coldness had ever damped the ardour of its flow. Disappointments and discouragements had been many in the interval ; sickness had been encountered, death had been looked in the face, perils by water and perils on the land had been gone through, but the same deep love for Africa was still there, and the earnest vow of his early ministry was still being carried out. During the ten years he had seen many changes. Deaths had been numerous, his own friends and fellow-labourers had been stricken down one by one at his side, and he alone remained of the faithful band of Europeans that had met at his first District Synod. Undauntedly he had pressed forward in the work, the words upon his lips ever being 'Let us be willing to lose everything—riches, honours, ease, even life itself, if Africa can thereby be won for Christ !'

"He had lost comrade after comrade," writes Mr. Thomas Champness ; "but he kept bravely on, doing the will of his Master with cheerful courage. Perhaps there was no element in his character more prominent than his cheerfulness in the presence of much suffering and peril. All those who worked with him felt that his blithe and courageous spirit was helpful to them, and that no one could afford to show 'the white feather' where he was."





## CHAPTER XXIII.

CHRISTMAS ON THE WEST COAST—THE DISTRICT  
SYNOD—ILLNESS AND DEATH OF BRYAN ROE  
—BURIED AT QUITTAH.

CHRISTMAS on the west coast of Africa, though a time of some merriment, is not the same as it is at home. There is such an utter absence of the things so essential to the season, that one feels that all the festivities are but a solemn farce.

Christmas with the thermometer registering eighty-eight degrees in the shade! Christmas without frost and snow, without ivy and holly, without cards and kind greetings, without parties and forfeits, and last, but not least, without the roast beef of Old England! "Why," ejaculated a disgusted trader in my hearing once, "we might just as well spend Christmas in a Jew's house!"

Notwithstanding all the drawbacks enumerated above, Mr. Ellis determined that, as far as in him lay, the joyful season of 1895 should be celebrated in a manner that became the occasion; the good old traditions of Christmastide should be kept up as far as possible, and his new house at Shagamu having just been completed, he decided that there

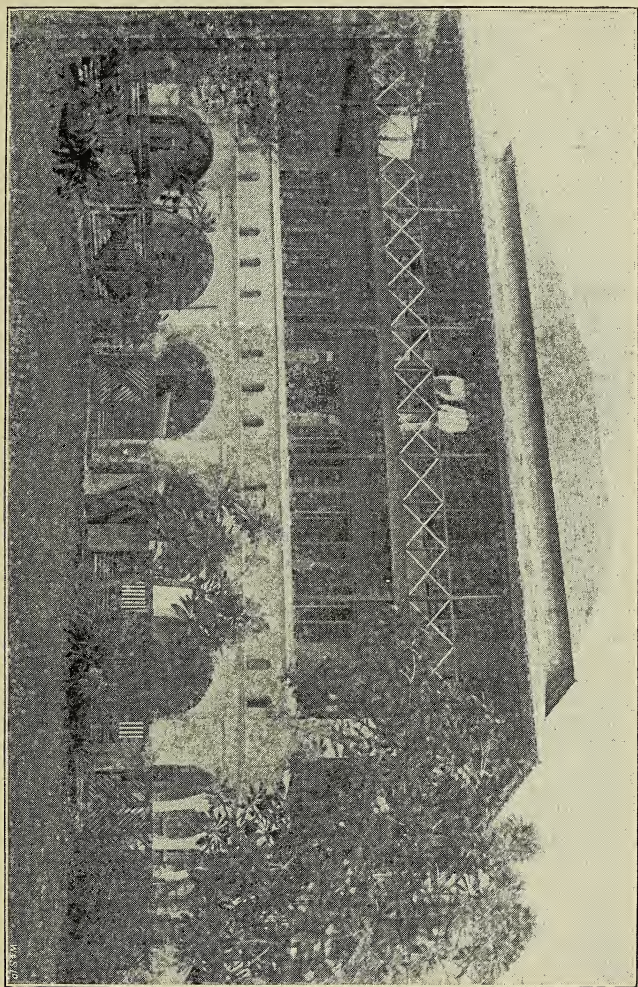
should be a "house-warming" connected with the festivities.

Mr. and Mrs. Roe had promised to be present, and as the time drew near Mr. Ellis began making vast preparations for the entertainment of his guests. The day came for the arrival of the Chairman and his wife, and all was in readiness to receive them in a befitting manner. But instead of Mr. and Mrs. Roe there came a letter saying that the former was suffering from dysentery and could not come, though he hoped to be able to fulfil his promise by the New Year. Disappointment, however, again came, for word was once more sent that he was unable to travel; his dysentery had become worse instead of better."

A few days spent at the beach near Lagos proved beneficial, and a longer stay, free from care and worry, might have rallied him; but as Messrs. Ellis and Hoad were due in Lagos on January 13th, in anticipation of the Synod, he returned to the town to make everything comfortable for his brethren—a characteristic act of thoughtfulness, the man ever thinking of others before of himself.

The Synod was an unusually trying one, many difficult problems having to be solved. The various interests of the work seemed to be antagonistic, and the financial burden of the Jebu Remo mission, some of the stations of which, it seemed, must be closed, pressed heavily upon the mind of the heroic man, whose love for Africa had passed into a proverb. Worries like these seemed more than he could well endure in his weak physical condition, but never once did he flinch or spare himself, even going so far as to preach the official sermon, which will long be





LAGOS MISSION HOUSE, WITH MR. AND MRS. ROE ON VERANDAH.

remembered for its extraordinary power and effect. The Church and its interests appeared to be his first and almost only thought. He was often on his knees seeking strength and guidance from God, and in spite of the very perplexing nature of the business, a more successful, encouraging, and satisfactory Synod cannot be remembered. The ministers were filled with admiration at the heroic fortitude of their leader, and seemed fired with a more determined enthusiasm for Christ's work. But at what a cost was this produced! The dysentery continued, vomiting in a cruel form came on, severe bodily pain was added, fever did its worst, and the iron constitution of Bryan Roe was strained to its utmost. The Synod ended, and, with a sigh of thankfulness that his work was done, he took to his bed for the first time. All seemed to go well for a few days, and no thought of his dying entered any mind; but waking one morning from a short slumber, he appeared very much weaker, and a second doctor was called in. Again he rallied, and, knowing the beneficial effects of a sea voyage, he was carried down in a hammock to the branch steamer and transhipped to the ss. *Batanga*, then lying in the Lagos roads, ready to proceed homewards. Mr. Ellis and Mr. Embury accompanied the invalid and his wife over the bar, and stayed with them until the anchor was weighed and the vessel about to sail on her voyage.

"How the memory of that day will live!" says Mr. Ellis.\* "The transfer from the house to the branch, from the branch to the surf-boat, and from the surf-boat to the mail steamer was done with the greatest care and the least possible movement, but

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\* Feb. 22nd, 1896.

the dysentery again appeared, the vomiting returned, and the old pains once more laid hold of him. When we bade him what proved to be a final farewell, he was too weak to reply, though fully conscious, and he smiled feebly, but with a bright, confident look upon his face, as though saying, "It is all right, and all is well."

"The cooling sea-breeze seemed to revive him somewhat," said Mrs. Roe, in relating the story to the teller, "and ere the vessel had proceeded far on her way he seemed manifestly better, and spoke of what we should do when we reached home. This buoyed me up so that tears of thankfulness ran from my eyes, and he said, 'There, don't weep; we are all right, we are going home.' And then his mind wandered to our bright-haired little Gladys, whom he had left quite an infant the year before. His love for our absent child was deep and strong, amounting almost to a passion, and I heard him murmuring softly to himself, 'Dear little Gladys; my darling little girl!'

"The doctor just then came in, and said, 'Well, how do you feel now?'

"'Better,' Bryan replied; 'but tired, oh, so tired! I do wish I could fall asleep.'

"'We will soon manage that for you,' said the doctor cheerfully. 'You shall have a sleeping draught.'

"At seven o'clock in the evening the draught was administered, and Bryan soon after fell peacefully asleep. I lay down on the settee facing the bunk, and seeing him breathing so regularly and quietly, fancied that all immediate danger was over. My heart was lighter than it had been for many weary days and wakeful nights, and worn out by constant watchings I gradually dozed off to sleep. I awoke

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\* On Oct. 28th a son was born, and named Bryan, after his lamented father.

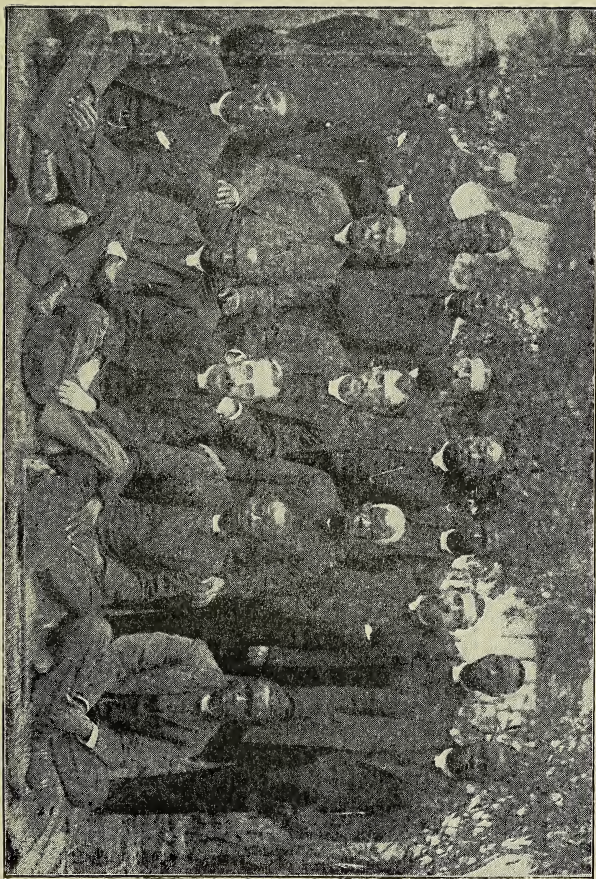


some hours later with a sudden start and a strange feeling that something was about to happen. I arose and went over to Bryan's bunk. He was still sleeping, but the former peacefulness seemed to have left him, and his breathing was laboured and heavy. Alarmed at this, I rang the electric bell, but as no one answered it I rushed on deck. The captain was on the bridge, and came down immediately on seeing me. We went and called the doctor, and then descended to the cabin. One glance seemed to satisfy the physician that the end was near. With a look of grave compassion, he turned to me and said very pitifully: 'Mrs. Roe, it would be criminal on my part to hide the true state of affairs from you any longer. Your husband is dying. I cannot hope that he will last over half an hour.'

"I was too stunned to speak. All my bright hopes were blighted at a moment's notice, and I felt powerless even to move. Silently we three watchers sat by my beloved one's side, my eyes dry and stony with an unspeakable grief, and my heart bursting with an unutterable sorrow. Slowly the minutes passed by. Eight bells—four a.m.—sounded from the deck, and with a breath that sounded like a sigh, Bryan passed away, while the bo'sun up above was crying out, 'All's well!' And then, as if in confirmation of this, we heard the words again from the other end of the ship, 'All's well—all's well!'

"I remember very little of what occurred afterwards. I can only recall sitting with folded hands and a hopeless heart on deck, gazing vacantly at the open sea before me, and the captain coming quietly up to me and saying, 'Mrs. Roe, will you just step this way for a moment, please?'





LAGOS DISTRICT SYNOD, 1896, TAKEN JUST BEFORE MR. ROE'S DEATH.

“Mechanically, I followed him across the deck to the other side of the ship, and there in the boat below I saw a coffin covered with a Union Jack. At first I knew not what it meant. I had not realised that Bryan was gone from me for ever. But it came to me now, and my pent-up grief burst out in a storm of passionate sobs and tears. I held out my hands, and cried, ‘Oh, Bryan, Bryan!’ Then the captain took hold of me, and signalled for the men to push off. I saw the boat move quickly through the heaving waters towards the golden-fringed shore. I heard the regular, rhythmic swish of the oars as they cut through the waves, and then unconsciousness mercifully came to my relief, and I was carried below.”

The body was landed and interred at Quittah, a town that Mr. Roe had visited and preached in only a year before.

“The sad news of his death,” writes the Rev. G. Dacuble, German missionary, “filled us all with deep and sincere sorrow, and immediately spread through the town, for he was well-known and respected here. Often had I heard him spoken of on account of the splendid addresses he had delivered in my church during my furlough at home.

“Immediately after the coffin was landed, we, in company with the captain, doctor, and other gentlemen of the *Batanga*, brought it into the church, and there the body of the never-tired champion of the Cross was placed in front of the pulpit in which he had once stood to speak the words of life and love. The coffin was adorned with flowers and palm leaves, and the church was filled with sympathising friends. I conducted the service, and gave out the hymn beginning with the words ‘We shall sleep, but not for ever,’ and

reading for lessons Isaiah xxv. 1-9, and Romans viii. 31-39. Though I had no time to prepare a funeral sermon, being much occupied in attending on a sick brother, I could not help saying a few simple words about our being assembled to join in a song of sorrow at the death of a faithful soldier of Christ. Then, while the bell was yet tolling, we committed his body to the grave, in the sure and certain hope of resurrection."

"I should naturally have chosen," said Mrs. Roe, "to have had the remains of my dear husband brought home; but as that could not be, there is comfort in the thought that he is laid to rest in the land where he worked so hard and which he loved so well."

"His very tomb," remarked Dr. Jenkins in his address at the memorial service held in the Great Queen Street Chapel, last May, "is an emblem of the large love which made every missionary a brother, for he lies under the pulpit of the North German Mission in Quittah."

In Lagos, meanwhile, great anxiety was manifested, and on the Sunday special prayers were offered up in all the churches for Mr. Roe's recovery, and the hymn 1,004 sung. Mr. Embury was appointed to preach at the Faji church in the morning, and stipulated that if any message came during the service it was to be sent up to him in the pulpit, even if he were in the middle of his sermon. But the day passed slowly by and no news arrived.

Monday morning came, and with it a cable from Quittah, which had been delayed in transit for over forty-eight hours. It was addressed to Ellis, at the Mission-house, and when it was placed in his hands he trembled like a leaf. For a moment he felt afraid to



open the humble brown envelope. What was the message it contained? Was the news good or bad? Would it send a thrill of joy into the hearts of the anxious waiters in the city? Or would it fill them with an overwhelming sense of grief? With hands that shook like aspen leaves, and a short, earnest prayer that the news might be favourable, the young missionary nervously tore open the envelope, and read the fatal message :

“Roe died at four this morning. Buried Quittah”! The paper fell from his nerveless grasp and fluttered aimlessly along the verandah. For the space of a few moments Mr. Ellis seemed hardly to apprehend the meaning of the words. Roe dead! Impossible! The voice that had so faithfully and for so long proclaimed the glad tidings of great joy to Africa’s sons, silent for ever! It could not be. His eyes must have deceived him—he must look again. But, alas! it was only too true : “Roe died at four this morning. Buried Quittah”!

Quickly the sad news spread through the town ; flags were lowered to half-mast, the church bells tolled forth in muffled peals, and throughout the entire colony there was heard a universal cry of sorrow and lamentation. Both European and African participated in the grief, and felt that in losing Bryan Roe they had lost a trusty comrade and a true friend. A noble soldier of the Cross had fallen on the field in the crisis of a great battle. An undaunted champion of the truth had been stricken down, and who would take up the weapons of his warfare and step into the open breach? The man had made his mark in the colony ; his name had become a household word. And not in Lagos only,



but for hundreds of miles up and down the coast-line, and into the far interior ; wherever he had gone with the messages of the Gospel, he had left behind him fragrant and precious memories.

Mr. Ellis cabled the sad intelligence immediately to the Mission House in London, and Mr. Olver at once wired to the Rev. David Roe, asking to see him. Utterly unconscious of the heavy blow that was to fall upon him and his family, Mr. Roe proceeded to Bishopsgate Street, and with tears in his eyes and a break in his voice Mr. Olver conveyed the mournful tidings to him. He was stunned for the moment by the suddenness of his bereavement, and could only murmur, "And shall I never see my brother again?"

"Yes, yes," cried Mr. Olver tenderly, "you shall see him again. If faithful to Christ you shall see him again. He is not dead, but sleeping until the morning of the glad awakening shall dawn."

With a sorrow-laden heart Mr. Roe went to break the news first to the mother of Mrs. Bryan Roe, and then to his own aged mother, then staying with him at Bow. He knew not what to say. Bryan was her youngest boy, and her love for him was, perhaps, even greater than the deep love she had for all her children. A presentiment of coming calamity seemed to possess her as soon as Mr. David Roe entered the room, accompanied by his brother, and she tremblingly asked, "Why have you come, Harvey? Is anything the matter?"

"I have heard bad news from Lagos, mother," replied Mr. David Roe, wishing to break the news as gently as he could.

But she grasped his meaning at once, and with a

bitter cry, "My poor lad is dead!" swooned away in his arms.

It is, it may be, with indifferent feelings that we read of the death of missionaries on far-off foreign fields, and we little think of the desolating sorrow that falls on many a loving heart at home. To us it is but a passing incident, soon forgotten amid the rush of other events; but to friends and relatives it is often a lifelong grief. We talk with gratitude and glowing enthusiasm of the sacrifices made for Foreign Missions by those who contribute freely to their support, but how very much greater is the sacrifice of those who give up husband, son, or brother for the furtherance of the cause? Who can estimate the weight of sorrow borne by the bereaved and bleeding hearts of those to whom Bryan Roe, David Hill, Josiah Hudson, Romilly Ingram, and F. W. Somerville were near and dear? Only God, who counts the mourners' tears, and Christ, who fully knows what human suffering is. He knows

The weariness and sorrow  
Of the sad hearts that come to Him for rest.

And the promise made to those who leave behind them friends and relatives for the Kingdom of God's sake is true, methinks, in the case of those who consent to be left behind—"they shall receive manifold more in this present time, and in the world to come life everlasting."





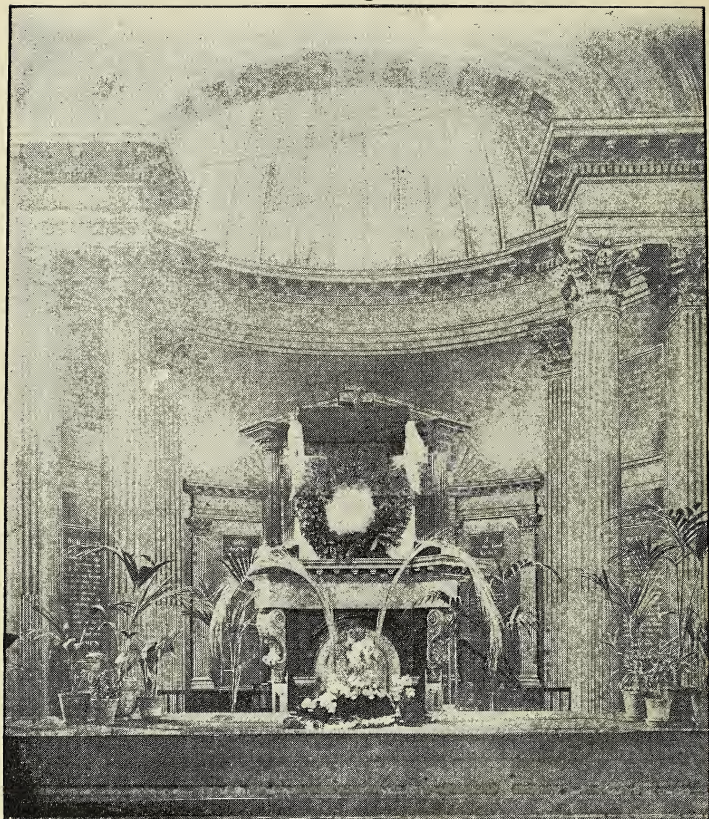
## CHAPTER XXIV.

### SOME TOUCHING TRIBUTES—FINIS.

“**F**ALLEN on the Field” was the heading given to the newspaper notices of the memorial service held last May to pay a last tribute of honour to Josiah Hudson, David Hill, Bryan Roe, and Romilly Ingram. A more appropriate title for such a service could not have been fixed upon. Bryan Roe always reminded me of a soldier on the field of battle, his sermons and speeches often glowing with intense ardour, and sounding out the call to arms. He was fond of calling Christians “soldiers of the Cross,” and he looked upon our Missionary work in Western Africa as a great warfare being waged against the powers of darkness. “If the news should come to you,” he said on leaving Finchley for Lagos, in 1890, “if the news should come to you that Bryan Roe is dead, lay it to your hearts that he died as a soldier of the Cross should.” Nearly six years elapsed between the utterance of the words and the event referred to; but when the sad news was wired home they sprang into people’s memories like a flash of lightning: “Lay it to your hearts that I died as a soldier should!”

The mournful tidings came to me in the reading-





GREAT QUEEN STREET CHAPEL—THE RICHMOND VICTORS' CROWN.



room of a little Gloucestershire village, through the columns of *The Daily News*, and for a moment I seemed dazed. It was not until I had read the paragraph through again that I fairly grasped the meaning of it. I had fought by his side, as it were, and his presence, courage, and enthusiasm had often nerved my heart in the fight for Africa's salvation. He had been my instructor and mentor on many an occasion. I owed a debt of deep gratitude to him which no earthly service could ever have paid, and the shadow of a great sorrow crept over my heart as I read the melancholy news. Bryan Roe dead! Yes. From the seat of war, so to speak, ay, even from the very field of battle, the tidings had been flashed home that the leader had fallen. There was consolation, however, in the thought that he had fallen as a soldier should. He had struggled through the business of the District Synod with the very shadow of death upon his brow, but not until the arduous work had been completed did he show forth signs of what was coming. He was the soldier mortally wounded in the hot hour of battle, but concealing his wound and fighting bravely on until the victory was won, and dying with the shouts of successful soldiers sounding in his ears and lighting up his fast-glazing eyes. "I have fought a good fight," said St. Paul in the swanlike song recorded in the second epistle to Timothy; "I have finished my course. I have kept the faith." Bryan Roe had done the same, and no better epitaph could be written upon his tombstone than those flowing words. The same idea seems to have struck the mind of the Rev. J. H. Samuel, for, in preaching an impressive and eloquent funeral sermon in Lagos, he chose those

words for his text. . And his brother, David Roe, in a memorial service at Old Ford Chapel, spoke from words of similar import. Other men have lived longer than Bryan Roe, and done far less work, for

We live in deeds, not words ;  
In thoughts, not in figures on a dial.

He crowded into those ten short years of his ministerial career a marvellous amount of work, and it almost seems to me now that his intense earnestness, his fervent zeal, his eagerness to be up and doing must have been the outcome of a presentiment that he was not destined for a long sojourn in this world. "I must work the works of Him that sent me while it is day ; the night cometh when no man can work."

"He was anxious at all times," says the Hon. J. J. Thomas, of Lagos, "for the advancement of the work of God in our district. Some years ago, when I was senior circuit steward of the Lagos district, he had many interviews with me touching the work of God in the town. We spent many hours discussing together important matters connected with the work, and I remember him saying to me on more occasions than one : ' If it is ever my lot to die in Africa, I shall have the satisfaction of knowing that I have discharged my duty faithfully.' Died as a soldier should !"

"His life was a grand and noble one," writes the Rev. T. J. Marshall, of Porto Novo, "and to write fully all that one has seen and heard of his ten years' service amidst privation, sickness, toil, care, and worry, would be almost an impossible task."

"We cannot adequately give expression to our sense of the loss which we as a circuit have sustained, having regard to the many excellent qualities

of our late Chairman. His genuine interest in, and sympathy with, our work, his readiness even under exceptional circumstances to further our interests, were qualities which made him very dear to us. And can we ever forget his ministrations among us, the sound advice and moral truths which he prominently set forth, especially to the young? God grant that, though his voice be now silent in the grave, the results of his labours may abound unto a glorious harvest.—Signed, Rev. J. B. Thomas, Lagos Circuit; and G. J. Cole, Society Steward.”

As a preacher, Bryan Roe stood out prominently from among his brethren in Africa, and his sermons were listened to in Lagos by large and appreciative audiences. “We were always sure of seeing a number of white faces among the congregation when it became known that Bryan Roe was to preach, and some of his sermons—given years before I landed in Africa—were spoken of and remembered when I left.

“His sermons,” adds the Hon. J. J. Thomas, “were the means of leading many to seek the Saviour.”

It is a great mistake to imagine that an average Lagos congregation would be content with a sermon inferior in quality to sermons preached at home, and Mr. Roe was as careful in his pulpit preparations as if he had been in charge of a London circuit. In almost his last letter to his brother David, he says, “I prepare my sermons as though I were engaged in the English work.”

How helpful his sermons in England were to many, may be judged from the fact that I have before me quite a pile of letters which he received at various times from those who had been blessed while listening to his words.

It would be possible to print page after page of appreciations of the man. I have been inundated with them from all parts of the world ; but I doubt if they could convey an adequate idea of the esteem and love in which he was held by all who knew him, " It was impossible not to like him. There was such an air of frankness and amiability about him, such an exuberance of good spirits, that he fairly carried one's affections by storm, and changed casual acquaintances into lifelong friends."

" The natives of West Africa trusted him as a brother," is one of the most striking tributes paid to his qualities in the Conference obituary notice, and this is emphasised strongly in the July number of the *Gold Coast Methodist Times*. " Bryan Roe manifested uniform respect for his native colleagues, and exercised implicit confidence in them. He fully appreciated their services, and sternly refrained from wounding their feelings and susceptibilities. He tried to look at things from the standpoint of the African, and never forced his own ideas upon his fellow-workers, white or black. ' Will it advance the Kingdom of Christ ? ' was the great consideration with him. He fulfilled the African's ideal of what a true missionary should be, and it is for this reason that human tears are still flowing over his lonely grave in the land he loved."

It is fitting that the story of Bryan Roe's life and work should end with a tribute from Africa, and I will say but little more. If what has been written leads some to consecrate their wealth or their lives to further the cause of Foreign Missions, Bryan Roe will not have died in vain. Africa is well deserving of the practical support and sympathy of all God's servants.



Mission work there is identified with some of the most illustrious names in the annals of missionary enterprise—names that shine like the silent stars, for ever and ever. It is associated with the labours of Robert Moffat, the African apostle. It is identified with the name of David Livingstone, who threaded his way, year after year, through the forests and rivers of Central Africa, and died at last in one of its swamps. It is hallowed by the memory of Mackay of Uganda, who won a whole country for Christ, and died at his post nobly doing his duty. It is consecrated by the blood of Bishop Hannington, foully murdered by the men he was seeking to save ; and it is dear to the hearts of all Methodists through the loving labours of Barnabas Shaw.

But, in addition to that, we owe Africa, and especially Western Africa, a deep debt : reparation for great and cruel wrongs. It was from the west coast that ruthless and wicked men, Englishmen, bore off thousands of helpless Africans to the bitter bonds of a dreadful slavery in America and the West Indies. We are but paying back what we owe when we spend our money in spreading abroad the light of the Gospel among the many outcast millions of the dark continent.

Ah, yes ! and when I think of it, we owe a debt, too, to the eighty men and women missionaries of our own Church who lie buried on the West Coast of Africa ; to Dunwell, Wrigley, Harrop, Waite, Bromwich, Clegg, Matthews, Mühleder, and last, but not least, Bryan Roe and W. F. Somerville. "Every station has its graves," it has been pathetically said, "but what do these graves mean ? They are our title-deeds to the country. Our claim to Western Africa as a mission centre is indisputable. The dust of more than

eighty of our devoted missionaries, with their wives and children, gives us a right to a region, to abandon which now would be treason to our Lord Jesus Christ." Men and women unknown now to you and me lie buried in the golden sand of Africa. Their names are found in no earthly book of martyrs, but they are inscribed on the great scroll of God among the number of those who have offered up their lives in the sacred cause of the Gospel ; they are indelibly written on the hearts and lives and memories of thousands to-day who rejoice in their labours. There need be no fear for the future of our work in Western Africa: "It may falter, but it cannot fail. It is God's cause, and it cannot fail. It is identified with the precious blood of Jesus Christ, with the purposes of redemption, with the gracious workings of the Holy Ghost, and it cannot fail. It has been consecrated by the prayers and tears and toils and blood of men and women of whom the world was not worthy, and it cannot fail."

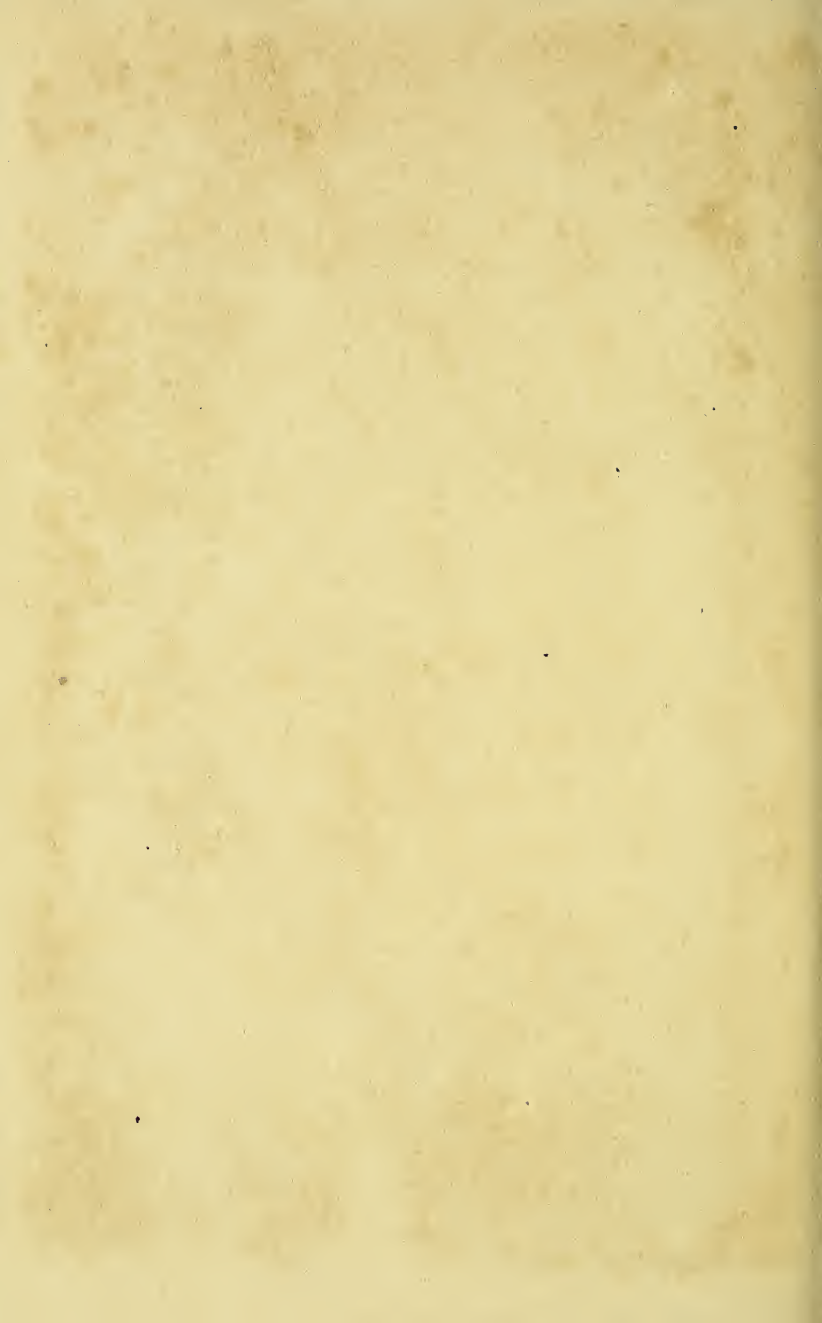
For the furtherance of that holy work Bryan Roe lived and died. It was no idle vow he made when, on bended knee, the day he first landed in Lagos, he consecrated his life to the salvation of the sons of Ham. That vow was ever fresh to him, and well and faithfully did he fulfil it. His body lies buried in the hot sands of Africa, but he has taken his place among

The dead but sceptred monarchs, who still rule  
Our spirits from their urns.

"Bryan Roe has not lived in vain. And if his sacrifice shall unseal the fountains of sympathy and generosity and prayer, he will not have died in vain."

THE END.









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